NATION

Delhi student gangraped by 4 on campus

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BUSINESS

Wholesale price inflation eases to 0.13% in Sept

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SPORTS

It's a clean sweep but questions remain

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

روزنامہ ساہ بنگلور

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Israel shoots dead at least 9 Palestinians

JERUSALEM, 14 OCT

Despite the US-brokered ceasefire in Gaza, Israel military said it opened fire to remove a threat posed by suspects who approached its forces in the northern Gaza Strip. Al Jazeera reported that at least nine Palestinians were killed. The military said the suspects had crossed a boundary for an initial Israeli pullback, in a violation of the deal. This comes as US President Donald Trump signed the Gaza peace deal in Egypt with other world leaders. On Monday, Hamas freed the remaining living hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners, and handed over the bodies of the dead hostages on Tuesday. *—PTI*

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IMF raises India's GDP growth forecast to 6.6%

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday revised upwards India's GDP growth forecast for the current fiscal to 6.6 per cent compared to its earlier estimate of 6.4 per cent on the back of strong growth, offsetting the impact of US tariffs on Indian shipments. In its latest World Economic Outlook (WEO), the multilateral lending agency also lowered the growth forecast by 20 basis points to 6.2 per cent for 2026-27. Earlier this month, the World Bank also raised India's growth forecast for the current fiscal to 6.5 per cent from 6.3 per cent estimated earlier, saying the country is expected to remain the fastest-growing major economy. *—PTI*

India's wild elephant numbers drop by 18 per cent

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

India's wild elephant population has been estimated at 22,446, lower than the 2017 figure of 27,312, according to the country's first-ever DNA-based count. The All-India Synchronous Elephant Estimation (SAIEE) 2025 puts India's elephant population between 18,255 and 26,645, with an average of 22,446. Officials, however, cautioned that the two cannot be compared because of a change in methodology. The government released the long-delayed report on Tuesday, nearly four years after the survey began in 2021. Scientists collected 21,056 dung samples from across elephant landscapes. The total field effort covered nearly 6.7 lakh km of forest trails. *—PTI*

SC adjourns hearing Sonam's detention to 15 Oct

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The Supreme Court on Tuesday adjourned to 15 Oct the hearing on a plea filed by Sonam Wangchuk's wife Gitanjali J Angmo challenging the climate activist's detention under the National Security Act and seeking his immediate release. A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and NV Anjaria posted the matter for hearing on Wednesday after senior advocate Kapil Sibal sought adjournment. The top court on 6 October issued notices to the Centre and the Union Territory of Ladakh. It, however, had refused to pass any order on Angmo's plea for providing her the grounds of detention and posted the matter for hearing on 14 October. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Instagram to restrict content for teenagers

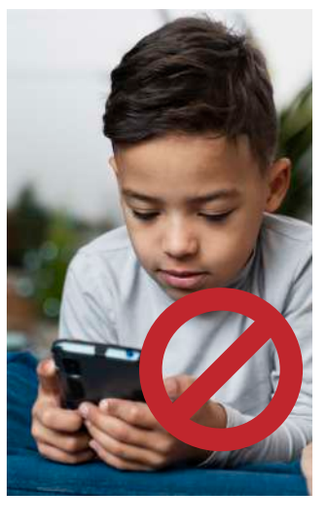


PHOTO: FREEPIK

BENGALURU, 14 SEPT

Instagram announced on Tuesday that teenagers will see PG-13 content (or content that they would normally be appropriate for a PG-13 movie) by default. Teenagers will be unable to opt out unless their parents agree, the Meta said in a statement.

Mild suggestive material or language may appear for such users, but explicit or harmful content will be off-limits. Parents who want stricter content can opt for further restrictions.

THE NEW RESTRICTIONS

- Teens will no longer be able to follow or interact with accounts that were found regularly share age-inappropriate content.
- Teens will no longer be able to search for "sensitive topics".
- Meta will use AI to monitor whether a person is underaged by analysing their photos, livestreams and videos.

PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED

PG-13

"We know teens may try to avoid these restrictions, which is why we'll use age prediction technology to place teens into certain content protections — even if they claim to be adults," the post said. This means that Meta will use AI in conjuncture to other tools to predict whether a user is a teenager. Developing on the pre-existing restrictions on sexually-explicit content, graphic or disturbing images, and adult content, content featuring strong language, risky stunts, or references to adult behaviour, including alcohol, marijuana, or other restricted items, will also be hidden or not recommended to teenagers.

Teenagers will also no longer be able to follow accounts that Meta believes regularly shares age-inappropriate content, or if their "if their name or bio suggests the account is inappropriate for teens. If teens already follow these accounts, they'll no longer be able to see or interact with their content, send them DMs, or see their comments".

The updates began in the US, UK, Australia, and Canada on Tuesday and will be rolled out elsewhere by the end of the year. *—Salar News*

GOOGLE TO INVEST $15B IN ANDHRA AI HUB

To partner with Adani for India's largest data centre

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Google will invest USD 15 billion over the next five years in setting up an AI hub in India, which will include the country's largest data centre in partnership with Adani Group.

The AI hub at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh will be Google's largest outside the US and will include 1-gigawatt data centre campus, new large-scale energy sources, and an expanded fibre-optic network, the tech super giant said.

"It's the largest AI hub that we are going to be investing in anywhere in the world outside of the US," Google Cloud CEO Thomas Kurian said at an event in New Delhi to sign the formal agreement.

The announcement was made during Bharat AI Shakti, a Google-hosted event here which served as a precursor to the upcoming India-AI Impact Summit 2026. The event saw attendance of Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, among others.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Google CEO Sundar Pichai, PM Narendra Modi, Adani Chairman Gautam Adani and Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu *PHOTO: PTI*

- The AI hub at Visakhapatnam will be Google's largest outside the US and will include 1-gigawatt data centre campus, new large-scale energy sources, and an expanded fibre-optic network

Google CEO Sundar Pichai said that he spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the "landmark development".

"This hub combines gigawatt-scale compute capacity, a new international subsea gateway, and large-scale energy infrastructure. Through it we will bring our industry-leading technology to enterprises and users in India, accelerating AI innovation and driving growth across the country," Pichai said on X.

Adani Enterprises, the flagship firm of billionaire Gautam Adani's conglomerate said its joint venture company AdaniConneX, and Google will develop India's largest AI data centre campus and new green energy infrastructure in Visakhapatnam.

Google's AI hub in Visakhapatnam is a multi-faceted investment of approximately USD 15 billion over five years (2026-2030), comprising gigawatt-scale data centre operations, supported by a robust subsea cable network and clean energy, to drive the most demanding AI workloads in India.

It did not say how much it would investment. *—PTI*

BJP names 71 candidates for Bihar polls

PATNA/NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The ruling BJP on Tuesday sprang surprises with its first list of 71 candidates for the upcoming Bihar assembly polls.

A surprise inclusion in the list of candidates was that of Ram Kripal Yadav, a former Union minister who had joined the BJP in 2014, growing disillusioned with his former mentor Lalu Prasad, the RJD President. He defeated Prasad's daughter Misa Bharti twice in the Patliputra Lok Sabha constituency, but lost the elections held last year.

He has been given the party ticket from Danapur, a seat on the outskirts of Patna, currently represented by RJD strongman Reet Lal Yadav.

Deputy CM Vijay Kumar Sinha, who did a hat-trick in Lakhisarai in the last elections, has been fielded from the same constituency again.

Several other ministers also feature in the list, including Renu Devi (Bettiah), Nitin Nabin (Bankipur), Nitish Mishra (Jhanjharpur), Jibesh Mishra (Jale), Sanjay Saraogi (Darbhanga), Neeraj Kumar Singh Bablu (Chhatapur) and Kedar Prasad Gupta (Kurhani), all of whom have been renominated from their sitting seats.

Former JD(U) MP Sunil Kumar Pintu and retired civil servant Sujit Kumar Singh, who had also joined the BJP on Monday, have been given tickets from Sitamarhi and Gaura Bauram, respectively.

Siddharth Saurav, who had won the Bikram seat on a Congress ticket in 2020, has been named the BJP candidate from there, a day after his formal induction into the party. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Ram Kripal Yadav; Siddharth Saurav; Vijay Kumar Sinha and omitted Speaker Nand Kishor Yadav *PHOTO: X*

WHO issues alert on 3 Indian cough syrups

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has issued a global alert on three substandard oral cough syrups in India, Coldrif, Respifresh TR, and ReLife, urging national authorities to report any detection. The warning follows at least 25 child deaths, mostly under five, from suspected kidney failure after consuming these syrups in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

The WHO advised healthcare professionals to report adverse effects or lack of expected results to their National Regulatory Authorities or Pharmacovigilance Centres. It also called for heightened surveillance of supply chains, especially informal or unregulated markets.

According to the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), the syrups contained toxic Diethylene Glycol (DEG). State authorities have halted production, suspended product authorisations, and initiated recalls. Contaminated batches were produced by Sresan Pharmaceutical, Rednex Pharmaceuticals, and Shape Pharma. No evidence suggests exports.

"These products fail to meet quality standards and pose severe, potentially life-threatening risks," the alert said. Toxic effects include vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, altered mental state, and acute kidney injury, which may be fatal. WHO urged patients not to use these syrups and to seek immediate medical attention if consumed. Authorities worldwide have been asked to notify WHO if the products are found in their jurisdictions. *—PTI*

World Health Organization

- Authorities worldwide have been asked to notify WHO if products Coldrif, Respifresh TR, and ReLife are found in their jurisdictions to prevent further harm.

Drugs department officials seal Coldrif cough syrup *PHOTO: ANI*

IS IT INFRINGING STATE'S RIGHT: SC EXTENDS STAY ON ED'S TASMAC PROBE

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The Supreme Court on Tuesday extended its interim order restraining the Enforcement Directorate (ED) from taking any coercive action, including searches or seizures, against the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAC) in connection with an alleged liquor retail scam.

A bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran questioned whether the ED's actions encroached on the state's investigative powers, even as Additional Solicitor General SV Raju argued that corruption is being concealed behind arguments of federalism.

The ruling DMK government was appealing a decision by Madras High Court. *—PTI*

SC reinstates Nanjegowda, but orders recount

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed the Karnataka High Court's order which had set aside the 2023 election of Congress leader KY Nanjegowda from Malur constituency in Kolar district, while directing a recount of votes within four weeks.

A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi, while hearing Nanjegowda's plea against the 16 Sept order, observed that the Congress leader shall continue as an MLA pending further orders.

The bench ordered the Election Commission of India (ECI) to conduct a recount of votes within four weeks and place the results before the court in a sealed cover.

It asked the body not to declare the results without the court's permission.

The apex court has listed the matter for further hearing on 24 November.

The High Court had passed the order based on an election petition filed by BJP candidate KS Manjunath Gowda, who had contested the 2023 Karnataka Assembly elections from Malur.

Nanjegowda had won by a margin of just 248 votes.

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Nanjegowda, submitted that the High Court erred in its finding after framing seven issues but did not decide any. *—Salar News*

AFTER 4 DECADES

MTV shuts down music channels

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

MTV, the channel that shaped youth culture for over four decades, is turning a new page as multiple music-focused channels are set to shut down by 31 December, 2025. Paramount Global announced that MTV Hits, MTV 80s, MTV 90s, Club MTV, MTV Music, and MTV Live will cease operations worldwide as part of a major network reorganisation.

The move reflects shifting audience behaviour. Streaming platforms such as YouTube, Spotify, Apple Music, and TikTok have overtaken traditional music television, leading to declining viewership. Over the years, MTV gradually pivoted from 24/7 music videos to reality shows and pop culture content, drawing mixed reactions.

Sources indicate that this decision also aligns with Paramount's cost-cutting measures, triggered in part by its recent merger with Skydance Media, reportedly saving $500 million globally, while focusing on digital-first platforms like Paramount+ and Pluto TV.

Fans and millennials worldwide have expressed nostalgia and sorrow on social media. "It reminds us of a time when discovering new #music was pure excitement," wrote an X user. Another said, "RIP MTV! After 40 years, MTV is shutting down all their music channels outside the US."

MTV made its debut in 1981 with the revolutionary tagline, "I want my MTV," transforming the visual experience of music, launching iconic artists, and redefining pop and rock culture.

While MTV HD will continue airing reality shows, the shutdown marks the end of an era for classic music television. *—Salar News*

6 channels

Paramount Global announced that MTV Hits, MTV 80s, MTV 90s, Club MTV, MTV Music, and MTV Live will cease operations as part of network reorganisation

Nirmala to visit flood-hit districts today

BIDAR, 14 OCT

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will visit the Kalyana Karnataka region on 15 October. Sharing the information on her official X account, the minister stated that she will inaugurate and inspect agricultural product value-addition units established across seven districts of the region. In her Monday post, Sitharaman wrote, "Starting tomorrow, I will be on a visit to the Kalyana Karnataka region. I will be visiting and inaugurating agricultural value-addition units, farmer training centers, and common facility centers established there. I will also review their production activities." Reacting to the news, IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge reiterated that the State was still not receiving its share of tax devolution. *—Salar News*

Biocon Chief flays City's crumbling infra again

DKS says govt is fixing it; MB Patil tells Shaw to do CSR

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

Biocon Chief Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw reignited the debate over City's infrastructure by publicly sharing a visiting overseas business executive's critical comments on Bengaluru's roads and garbage.

State Ministers acknowledged the problems and said fixing it would require some time. They also called for collective cooperation to make the city better.

In a post on X that has since gone viral, Shaw wrote, "I had an overseas business visitor to Biocon Park who said 'Why are the roads so bad and why is there so much garbage around? Doesn't the Govt want to support investment? I have just come from China and can't understand why India can't get its act together, especially when the winds are favourable?"

She tagged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy CM DK Shivakumar and IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge.

Reacting to Shaw's post, Priyank said be it is San Francisco, London or Bengaluru, every developing City faces challenges. In order to overcome it, addressing the needs of the people and attracting investments is important, he said. "It is the prime responsibility of the government, and we will do it."

He added that suggestions of prominent figures like Mazumdar-Shaw was valued, while defending the State government's tolerance for criticism.

"Let them do it in Maharashtra or UP. Where will you be if you make constructive criticism? You will be in jail," he told reporters in City.

However, MLA MB Patil took a slightly different tone.

"Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw needn't panic," he said. "Let her take up some work under CSR in her area."

"She has created a name for Bengaluru with Biocon. Bengaluru has also given back to her. It is mutual," he said. "Thousands of crores have been given (for repairs). When the work is going on, you tweeting again is not in good taste." *—Agencies*

The City's roads such as Jayamahal Main Road are treacherous due to lack of maintenance **PHOTOS: MOHAMMAD ASAD**

> I had an overseas business visitor to Biocon Park who said 'Why are the roads so bad and why is there so much garbage around? Doesn't the Govt want to support investment?' I just came from China and can't understand why India can't get its act together -Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Biocon Chief

> Yes, challenges exist, but we're addressing them... Under the Greater Bengaluru Authority, East Corporation alone will now retain Rs 1,673 Cr of its own revenues to directly improve infra in 50 wards... Instead of tearing Bengaluru down, let's build it up. The world sees India through Bengaluru!
>
> -DK Shivakumar, Deputy Chief Minister

PHOTO: X/@DKSHIVAKUMAR

DKS meets Singapore Consul-General

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Tuesday met with Edgar Pang, Consul-General of Singapore, during a visit to the City to discuss strengthening cooperation in urban development, innovation, and investment. In a post on X, Shivakumar remarked, "Had a warm interaction with Edgar Pang... We discussed opportunities to strengthen cooperation in urban development, innovation and investment." He highlighted that "Karnataka and Singapore share a forward-looking vision that can pave the way for stronger partnerships for growth and progress." This meeting follows a series of high-level diplomatic engagements, including the recent visit of Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong to India. *—ANI*

5 held for double murder, main accused shot at

VIJAYAPURA, 14 OCT

Five individuals have been arrested in connection with a double murder case in the State including the alleged mastermind, Akshay Juljule, who sustained a gunshot wound to the leg while attempting to escape police custody. Superintendent of Police Laxman Nimbargi stated, "When the police went to arrest, Juljule tried to flee the spot on a bike. The police first fired in the air, and when the accused attempted to flee, he was shot in the leg." The victims, Sagar Belundagi, 25 and Isahak Khureshi, 24, were reportedly stoned to death by a group in Kannur village, an act of revenge linked to old enmity. Two policemen were also injured during the operation, which is ongoing. *—PTI*

Raichur cyber cops recover Rs 18L in trading scam

RAICHUR, 14 OCT

The Raichur Cyber Crime Division has recovered Rs 18.29 lakh for a resident who lost money in a fake online trading scam, Superintendent of Police Puttamadayya said. Lakshmikant Venkobachar of Vidyanagar invested Rs 58.57 lakh between August 2020 and April 2021 in a fraudulent trading platform named "Trade MIFS" after seeing an ad on Facebook. When no returns came, he filed a complaint in October 2021. Investigations revealed that Bathurusman Mohammad Hussain from Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu, had transferred the money into relatives' bank accounts without their knowledge. The accused later died, and a charge sheet was filed. The recovered amount has been refunded. DYSP Venkatesh Hogibandi and team led the probe. *—Salar News*

EXPLOSIVES DETONATED

Security forces foil major 'Maoist' attack in Vijayapura

VIJAYAPURA, 14 OCT

Security forces have successfully thwarted a significant Maoist plot by recovering a substantial cache of explosives in Vijayapura district. The operation, conducted by a joint team comprising Cobra 206, CRPF 229, 153, and 196 from Talpada Base Camp, took place in the KGB foothills area on Monday at approximately 3pm.

During the extensive search, the team unearthed 51 live bomb-making grenades (BGLs), 100 bundles of HT aluminium wire, 50 steel pipes, 40 iron plates, 20 iron sheets, and a large quantity of electrical wiring, all indicative of potential plans to inflict serious harm on security forces. Additionally, five pressure IEDs were discovered and safely detonated with assistance from the Bomb Disposal team.

Ongoing patrols and search operations continue to ensure the area remains secure. In a separate incident, an active cadre of KCP (PWG) was arrested in Bishnupur, Manipur, along with an array of weapons and narcotics.

The arrested cadre, Moirangthem Mohon Singh, 42, is a resident of Sagolband Tera Sayang Leirak, Imphal West.

The government had dissolved the Anti-Naxal Force (ANF) earlier this year as the presence of Maoists had substantially been reduced. *—ANI*

- During the search, the team unearthed 51 live bomb-making grenades (BGLs), 100 bundles of HT aluminium wire, 50 steel pipes, 40 iron plates, 20 iron sheets, and a large quantity of electrical wiring and arrested a cadre from Imphal, Manipur

'Getting death threats because I questioned RSS'

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

State Minister Priyank Kharge on Tuesday claimed he has been receiving phone calls filled with threats, intimidation and filthiest abuses targeting him and his family for questioning RSS activities in government schools, colleges, and public institutions.

"For the past two days, my phone hasn't stopped ringing... simply because I dared to question and restrain RSS activities," Kharge posted on X. He added, "If they think threats and personal jibes will silence me, they are mistaken. This has just begun."

Kharge recently wrote to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah requesting restrictions on RSS shakhas in government spaces. Siddaramaiah said he is unaware of threat calls and has forwarded the matter to the Chief Secretary for review.

'DIDN'T WANT COMPLETE BAN'

Clarifying his stance, Kharge said he never sought a ban on RSS. "Where have I told to ban RSS? They are using government colleges, schools, and grounds... They are poisoning the minds of young children," he said, adding children should learn at school, not be indoctrinated. He urged RSS activities be confined to private spaces and questioned why BJP leaders' children are not involved in shakhas or Gaurakshak roles. *– Agencies*

TCS workers protest in City

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

Several workers protested against Tata Consultancy Services' (TCS) mass layoff plan at the TCS ITPL Whitefield Campus in City on Tuesday.

Led by IT & ITES Democratic Employees Association (IIDEA), worker demanded that TCS rolled back on its plan to layoff between 20,000 and 30,000 workers. They said that administration was primarily targeting mid-senior level employees.

Earlier, The Karnataka State IT/ITES Employees Union (KITU) in a statement said that "TCS has now crossed from corporate arrogance into open contempt for Indian labour law". *– Salar News*

Teacher goes missing during caste survey

KOLAR, 14 OCT

A 53-year-old woman teacher, Akthar Begum, went missing on Monday while conducting the Socio-Economic and Caste Survey in Kolar. According to sources in the Education Department, she left her Mahalakshmi Layout residence that morning without carrying the required survey kit.

Officials said she had been under pressure due to the time-consuming nature of the survey.

Block Education Officer Radhamma said Begum's husband is a retired employee and her daughter, an engineering graduate, works in City. *—Salar News*

Man claims to perform black magic, cheats many

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

A 49-year-old man, identified as Dada Peer, was arrested for allegedly cheating people by claiming to perform rituals to remove black magic or retrieve hidden treasures, police said on Tuesday.

Acting on a tip-off on 26 September, Hulimavu police detained Peer near Bannerghatta Main Road. He was found in possession of 485.4 grams of stolen gold ornaments worth Rs 53 lakh.

A senior officer said Peer confessed to stealing the ornaments and searching for buyers to sell them. "He deceived the public by claiming to perform rituals or puja, collected gold under the pretext, and then escaped," the officer added.

The accused revealed a similar offence in Bhadravathi, Shivamogga district, Karnataka. Police said half of the stolen gold was kept at his Kolar residence, while the rest was pledged at jewellery shops in Nagpur and BTM Layout, in City. *—PTI*

Lokayukta raids 12 officials for graft

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

Lokayukta officials on Tuesday launched simultaneous raids across Karnataka targeting 12 government personnel, including a surveyor from the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL), in connection with allegations of disproportionate assets. The coordinated operations commenced in the early morning hours at various locations associated with the officials being investigated.

Among those who were raided are Jyothi Mary, First Division Assistant at the Department of Health and Family Welfare in Hassan; Dhoolappa, Assistant Director of Agriculture in Kalaburagi; Chandra Kumar, Assistant Director of Agriculture in Chitradurga; and Lakshminarayan P Nayak, Road Transport Officer in Udupi.

The operation also included Manjunath G, a Medical Officer at Mallasandra Maternity Hospital in Bengaluru, and Jagdish Naik, Assistant Executive Engineer at the Karnataka Rural Infrastructure Development Limited (KRIDL) in Davangere. *—PTI*

The cash that the ED seized after raiding 12 government employees in disproportionate assets cases **PHOTO: SALAR**

FRAUDSTERS HIRED ON LINKEDIN

Digital arrest: Fake BPO targets Americans

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

Cybercrime police in Bengaluru said on Tuesday that the gang arrested last week for running a fake Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) firm had targeted American citizens through a "digital arrest" scam.

Operating under the name Cybits Solutions Pvt Ltd, the group recruited around 20–25 youngsters online under the pretext of legitimate employment and trained them in cyber fraud.

Using personal data collected from the internet, they posed as officials from law enforcement and investigation agencies, threatening victims with fake cases under narcotics and money-laundering laws. Under the guise of "helping" them, they extorted money through online transfers. The "employees" revealed that they had uploaded job information on platforms such as WorkIndia and LinkedIn, and websites offering employment opportunities.

The accused lured jobseekers from different states to Bengaluru, offering them call-centre jobs and accommodation in HSR Layout and BTM Layout. After three weeks of training, employees were taught details about the US Border Security Force, Postal Service, and Customs and Border Protection Force. "Using live servers provided by the company, they called people (mostly Americans), intimidated them by saying they were involved in drugs trafficking or money laundering cases, showed them fake arrest warrants and fake police IDs, and demanded money for their 'release'," police said.

Police seized 41 computer systems, 25 mobile phones, routers, switches, registers, and ID cards during raids. Sixteen people were arrested—eight from Maharashtra, four from Meghalaya, and four from Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Gujarat.

Investigators said the gang used the website Justpaste.it to host "digital arrest scripts".

Digital arrest is a scam that extorts money from victims through fear, deceit, and intimidation.

Fraudsters impersonate law enforcement officials, threatening arrest, frozen bank accounts, or passport cancellations to coerce victims into paying a fine. *—PTI*

City Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh looks at the devices used by the cyber criminals seized by HSR Layout police, in Bengaluru on Tuesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD**

- In digital arrest scams, fraudsters impersonate law enforcement officials, threatening arrest, frozen bank accounts, or passport cancellations to coerce victims into paying a 'fine'

Police seized 24.920 kilograms of ganja valued at Rs 24.92 lakh **PHOTO: SALAR**

Police seize Rs 2.4 crore worth of ganja, MDMA

BIDAR/BENGALURU, 14 OCT

In two significant operations, State police have seized illegal narcotics totalling over Rs 2.4 crore, resulting in multiple arrests. In Bidar, authorities confiscated 24.920 kilograms of ganja valued at Rs 24.92 lakh from a suspect caught selling the drug outside the KEB Function Hall on the Bidar–Kamthana Road. Following a tip-off, officers from Gandhigunj Police Station conducted a raid, apprehending the accused.

In a separate incident in the City, two foreign nationals—one male and one female—were arrested for allegedly peddling MDMA crystals and cocaine estimated at Rs 2.15 crore. Police seized 490 grams of MDMA and 43 grams of cocaine during a raid in Mahalakshmi Layout, initiated after receiving intelligence on 8 October. During questioning, one accused implicated two other individuals in the operation.

While one suspect has been arrested, efforts are underway to locate the second, who remains at large.

—Salar News with Agencies

PHOTO: PTI

PK not to take on Tejashwi in Raghopur

PATNA, 14 OCT

Curtains were virtually down on speculations that Prashant Kishor may contest against Tejashwi Yadav, as the Jan Suraaj Party (JSP) on Tuesday declared its candidate from Raghopur, where the RJD leader is aiming at a hat-trick. JSP National President Uday Singh handed the party symbol to Chanchal Singh for Raghopur, an assembly seat in Vaishali district. A photo of it was shared on social media. In sharp contrast to the previous two occasions when the party released lists of 51 and 66 candidates at crowded press conferences, the one-off announcement came away from media glare. When Kishor was asked about such a possibility, he said that "Tejashwi Yadav will then definitely lose Raghopur, just like his ally Rahul Gandhi.". *—PTI*

JMM worker killed over land dispute in Palamu

MEDININAGAR, 14 OCT

A Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) worker, Munna Sinha,38, was murdered in Palamu district, allegedly over a land dispute. Sinha, of Dandar Kala village, was attacked by over a dozen assailants while ploughing his field with a tractor. Police said the attackers tried to stop him from working and assaulted him with traditional weapons when he refused to comply. The victim sustained critical injuries and died en route to Medininagar Medical College and Hospital. The Station House Officer of Panki police station confirmed that an axe, believed to be the murder weapon, has been seized. Authorities are conducting raids across the area to identify and apprehend all the assailants involved in the attack. No arrests have been made so far, and probe are on. *—PTI*

Manipur security ops result in arrest, weapon seizure

CHURACHANDPUR, 14 OCT

Security forces in Manipur conducted separate operations across the state, resulting in arrests and the recovery of a large cache of weapons. In Imphal West, Naorem Thembung, 24, an active cadre of the KCP (PWG) group, was nabbed from Patsoi. In Tengnoupal district, an extortionist, Leishangthem Surchandra Singh, was held, with authorities recovering two mobile phones and a receipt book documenting illegal collections. A significant haul of ammunition was also seized near Churachandpur police station, including rifles, a country-made mortar, grenades, and 25 live rounds of 7.62mm ammunition. Authorities confirmed of securing all items, and investigations continue to identify and apprehend any remaining suspects. *—ANI*

Haryana ASI kills self, names late Haryana IPS officer

CHANDIGARH, 14 OCT

A Haryana Police assistant sub-inspector, Sandeep Kumar, was found dead in Rohtak district on Tuesday, allegedly having committed suicide. His body was discovered at his residence on Ladhaut-Dhamar Road. In a disturbing twist, he reportedly left behind a six-minute video and a three-page suicide note that purportedly accuses the late IPS officer Y Puran Kumar of corruption. Sandeep Kumar had been involved in the arrest of head constable Sushil Kumar, an associate of Puran, who recently died from a gunshot wound in his home. The video alleges serious misconduct, with Sandeep stating, "even Bhagat Singh made sacrifices... today, this country will awaken when we sacrifice ourselves on the path of truth." *—PTI*

Lalu gives tickets; Tejashwi intervenes

Tickets taken back stating 'technical issues'

PATNA, 14 OCT

RJD President **Lalu Prasad** gave away party tickets to several candidates until his son and heir apparent Tejashwi Yadav early on Tuesday pointed out that the INDIA bloc, helmed in Bihar by the Rashtriya Janata Dal, was yet to formally announce a seat-sharing formula.

A stampede-like situation was witnessed on Monday evening outside 10, Circular Road, the bungalow allotted to the RJD supremo's wife Rabri Devi, a former CM, when the couple returned from Delhi, where they had appeared before a court. As the air remained thick with anticipation, aspirants, who apparently received phone calls from the party, began pouring in, only to emerge minutes later, with the party symbol in their hands and a broad smile on their faces.

However, Yadav, who returned from Delhi a few hours later, was said to have been upset with the development.

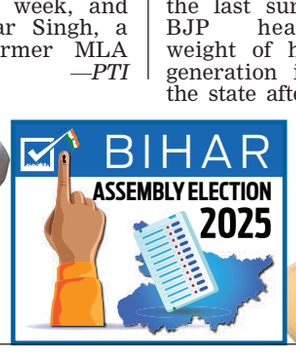
According to RJD sources, he told his father that photographs and video clips of party candidates with the symbol could not go down well with alliance partners with whom a deal was yet to be struck. Hence, distribution of party symbols was brought to a stop and, well past midnight, those who had got these, were asked to return the tickets on the ground of "technical issues".

The sources said that a formal announcement of candidates would be made "latest by this evening" since Yadav was himself likely to file his nomination papers from Raghopur on Wednesday.

Prominent among those who got RJD symbols were Sunil Singh (Parbatta), who quit JD(U) last week, and Narendra Kumar Singh, a several-term former MLA from Matihani. *—PTI*

INDIA may announce seat-sharing by today

Members of the opposition Mahagathbandhan were discussing every assembly constituency in Bihar carefully, and the seat-sharing arrangement might be announced by Wednesday morning, a Congress leader said. Speaking to reporters in Patna on Tuesday, Congress national spokesperson Abhay Dubey claimed that the BJP's announcement of its partial candidates' list clearly indicated "friction" within the NDA camp. He said the opposition coalition might announce the seat-sharing arrangement by Wednesday morning. *—PTI*



BJP drops speaker Nand Kishore Yadav

Samrat Choudhary to contest after over a decade

PATNA/NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The BJP on Tuesday denied a ticket to Speaker **Nand Kishore Yadav**, a seven-term MLA, while fielding Deputy CM **Samrat Choudhary** after over a decade in its first candidates list.

Yadav, who was said to be hoping for a ticket for his son, however, promptly came out with a social media post, announcing, "I stand with the decision taken by the BJP. I have no complaints. I welcome the new generation of leadership."

Yadav was first elected an MLA way back in 1995, from Patna East, which was renamed as Patna Sahib after the delimitation in 2008, and was seen as the last surviving BJP heavyweight of his generation in the state after the death of former deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi.

BJP has also fielded Health and Law Minister Mangal Pandey, a member of the legislative council, naming him the BJP candidate from Siwan for the assembly polls.

While Choudhary, who had last won an assembly election from Parbatta in 2010 on an RJD ticket, has been fielded from adjoining Tarapur.

Notably, both Choudhary and Pandey are former state BJP presidents, and so is Yadav, who has been replaced in Patna Sahib with Sanjay Kumar Gupta, a low-key state Secretary of the party.

Art and Culture Minister Motilal Prasad was one of the other dropped candidates. Prasad's Riga seat has gone to Baidyanath Prasad.

BJP sources put the number of sitting MLAs who have been denied a second chance at "around 10".

The list includes nine women, including ace shooter Shreyasi Singh, who made her debut from Jamui five years ago. *—PTI*

JD(U) MP to resign; MLA sits on dharna

JD(U)'s Bhagalpur MP Ajay Kumar Mandal sought to resign on Tuesday, stating that he was not consulted over the distribution of tickets for the Bihar assembly elections in his region. The Nitish Kumar-led party is yet to comment on the letter, which Mandal shared on X. He alleged that the "prioritising outsiders" has "weakened the roots" of the JD(U), adding that "party workers are feeling sidelined". Additionally, JD(U) MLA Gopal Mandal, who is understood to have a slim chance of getting a party ticket for the upcoming assembly polls, on Tuesday sat on a dharna near Bihar CM's residence. *—PTI*

48-HR SILENCE PERIOD

All bulk messages under EC radar

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

As Bihar prepares for phase one of assembly polls on 6 November, the Election Commission (EC) has warned that bulk SMSes and audio messages during the 48-hour 'silence period', which starts before the conclusion of voting, is prohibited.

In a note issued on 9 October, outlining campaigning restrictions, the poll authority said, political advertisements on any election matter in TV, cable networks, radio, cinema halls, use of bulk SMS/voice messages, audio visual displays in any polling area during the period of 48 hours ending with the hour fixed for the conclusion of the poll for any election in the polling area is prohibited.

Separately, in a statement on Tuesday, the EC said it has issued orders on 9 October, requiring every registered and national and state political party and every contesting candidate to apply to the Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) for pre-certification of all political advertisements on electronic media, including social media before publication.

MCMCs have been constituted at the district and state levels for pre-certification of political advertisements as per the prescribed guidelines.

No political advertisements are to be released to any internet-based media/websites, including social media websites, by political parties or candidates without pre-certification from the respective MCMC, it cautioned.

The MCMCs will also keep a strict vigil on suspected cases of paid news in the media and take suitable action. *—PTI*

India, Mongolia hold trade talk

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

India has been a "reliable partner" in Mongolia's development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday after holding wide-ranging talks with Mongolian President Khurelsukh Ukhnaa, who is on a four-day visit to New Delhi, his first as president.

Following the discussions, Modi announced that India will provide free e-visas to Mongolian citizens. He highlighted India's USD 1.7 billion line of credit for Mongolia's oil refinery project, India's largest development partnership globally, involving over 2,500 Indian professionals working alongside Mongolian counterparts. The project will bolster Mongolia's energy security.

Modi emphasised the deep cultural and spiritual bonds between the two nations, noting their shared Buddhist heritage and referring to them as "spiritual siblings."

The partnership extends across defence, energy, mining, IT, education, healthcare, and culture. Modi also highlighted emerging private-sector collaborations in energy, critical minerals, digital technology, agriculture, and dairy. *—PTI*

Mongolian President Khurelsukh Ukhnaa with PM Narendra Modi during a joint press statement at Hyderabad House, in New Delhi PHOTO: PTI

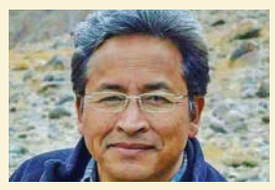
M'rashtra poll body requests SIR deferral

MUMBAI, 14 OCT

The Maharashtra State Election Commission has urged the Election Commission to postpone the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls until January 2026, citing the upcoming local body elections.

In a letter dated 9 September, the State Election Commission (SEC) emphasised that officials would be occupied with these elections. Elections for all 29 municipal corporations, 247 municipal councils, and several zilla parishads and panchayat samitis are scheduled, with SEC pointing out that the same officials handle both SIR and local body polls.

Additionally, a delegation of Opposition leaders, including Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray, met Maharashtra's Chief Electoral Officer to raise concerns about alleged irregularities in the electoral process. *—PTI*



'Wangchuk not in solitary confinement'

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Climate activist **Sonam Wangchuk**, detained under the National Security Act (NSA), is not being held in solitary confinement and continues to enjoy full visitation rights, the Jodhpur Central Jail superintendent has informed the Supreme Court.

In an affidavit, the official said Wangchuk remains in good physical and mental health, is consuming a normal diet, and is housed alone in a 20 feet × 20 feet standard barrack in the general ward.

All his meetings with visitors take place under police supervision, as required by prison regulations.

The affidavit was submitted in response to a petition by Wangchuk's wife, Gitanjali J Angmo, challenging his detention and seeking his immediate release.

In a separate affidavit, the Leh District Magistrate (DM) justified the NSA order, stating Wangchuk had indulged in "activities prejudicial to the security of the state, maintenance of public order and essential services."

The DM added that the detention order, issued after the 26 September Ladakh violence, has been referred to the Advisory Board. *—PTI*

2 terrorists killed in J&K encounter

SRINAGAR, 14 OCT

Two unidentified terrorists were killed as Army troops foiled an infiltration bid along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials here said on Tuesday.

The troops noticed suspicious movement along the LoC in Kupwara late on Monday night and challenged the intruders. There was a brief exchange of fire between the two sides, the officials said.

"Based on specific intelligence input by JKP & corroborated by sources and agencies, regarding likely infiltration attempt, a joint operation was launched by #IndianArmy and @JmuKmrPolice in Machhal Sector, Kupwara on 13 October, 2025.

"Alert troops spotted suspicious activity and challenged, resulting in terrorists opening fire. Troops responded with effective fire, neutralising two terrorists," the Srinagar-based Chinar Corps said in a post on X. The operation is in progress, it said. *—PTI*

Ch'garh BJP worker killed by Naxalites

BIJAPUR, 14 OCT

In Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, Naxalites have killed a BJP worker, Satyam Punem, suspecting him of acting as a police informer, officials reported on Tuesday. Punem, a resident of Mujalkanker under Ilmidi police station limits, was strangled to death on Monday night.

Following the incident, police teams were dispatched to the area. A handwritten pamphlet, attributed to the Madded area committee of Maoists, claimed Punem had continued helping the police despite prior warnings.

This latest killing adds to the ongoing Maoist violence in the Bastar division, which includes seven districts such as Bijapur. Nearly 40 people have died in separate incidents this year. Between January 2023 and December 2024, 11 BJP leaders and workers were also killed in the division, highlighting the threat by Maoist insurgents. *—PTI*

HARYANA ON ALERT

'IPS officer's death not about one family'

CHANDIGARH, 14 OCT

In the wake of protests following the alleged suicide of IPS officer Y Puran Kumar, the Haryana government has asked the police to maintain strict vigil and harmony by working closely with community leaders. It said field officers must be prepared to take proactive steps to prevent any untoward incidents.

The directives were issued by the General Administration Department on 12 October, on behalf of the chief secretary to additional chief secretary (Home), director general of police, all divisional commissioners, all deputy commissioners and all commissioners and superintendents of police.

RAGA MEETS OFFICER'S FAMILY

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said that Kumar's death is about the respect of all Dalits, while asking Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini to act immediately and arrest the officials responsible.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi meets the family members of Haryana IPS officer Y Puran Kumar, in Chandigarh PHOTO: PTI

Addressing reporters after meeting the family of the senior police officer who was found with a gunshot wound in his Chandigarh home last week, Gandhi said there was systematic discrimination against Kumar to demoralise him and damage his career.

The Congress leader pressed for the funeral of the officer to be held.

He said it is only not a matter of one family but of the respect of every Dalit brother and sister.

DGP SENT ON LEAVE

The Haryana government sent state DGP Shatrujeet Kapur on leave, amid mounting attacks from the Opposition over Kumar's alleged suicide.

The late-night development came days after the government transferred Narendra Bijarniya, former Rohtak Superintendent of Police.

An official order said OP Singh, a 1992-batch IPS officer of DGP rank, has been assigned the "additional charge of DGP Haryana during the leave period of Shatrujeet Kapur". *—PTI*

100 Pak soldiers died during Op Sindoor: Top Army officer

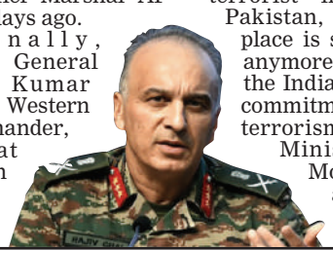
NEW DELHI/JAMMU, 14 OCT

Pakistan is understood to have lost over 100 military personnel along the Line of Control during Operation Sindoor, Indian Army's Director General Military Operations Lieutenant General **Rajiv Ghai** said on Tuesday, citing list of awards conferred posthumously by that country's military.

The top military official also said that Pakistan lost at least 12 aircraft during the conflict in May while echoing the details shared by Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal AP Singh a few days ago.

Additionally, Lieutenant General Manoj Kumar Katiyar, the Western Army Commander, said that Operation Sindoor 2.0 is set to be "deadlier" than its predecessor, asserting Pakistan's continued policy of "bleed India through a thousand cuts." Speaking to reporters, he stated, "The action we will take this time will be more powerful. It has to be deadlier. There is no doubt about it." He warned that while Pakistan lacks the capacity for a full-scale war, it may attempt more attacks similar to the Pahalgam incident.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, addressing the National Security Guard's 41st Raising Day, affirmed that Operation Sindoor had devastated terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan, declaring, "No place is safe for terrorists anymore." He highlighted the Indian security forces' commitment to combating terrorism under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's zero-tolerance policy. *—PTI*



110 protesting power outage in Mumbai booked

THANE, 14 OCT

A case has been registered against 110 people after they staged a protest outside Rabale police station in Navi Mumbai over a prolonged power outage in their locality, officials said on Tuesday.

Locals demonstrated late Saturday, continuing into early Sunday, following a three-day electricity failure in their area. A first information report (FIR) names 110 individuals, of whom 13 have been identified. No arrests have been made, and an investigation is ongoing. The FIR states four main accused circulated WhatsApp messages to incite the gathering, after which the group allegedly blocked roads and shouted slogans in protest against the outage. *—PTI*

PHOTO: QATAR AIRWAYS

Qatar Airways Hong Kong flight diverted

AHMEDABAD, 14 OCT

A Hong Kong-bound Qatar Airways flight from Doha was diverted to Ahmedabad on Tuesday after developing technical issues mid-air, officials said. Flight QR816, which departed from Hamad International Airport around 9 am, landed safely at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport (SVPIA) at approximately 2.40 pm. "Due to some technical issues, the Doha–Hong Kong flight was diverted to Ahmedabad as a precautionary measure. It landed safely," an airport official confirmed. The aircraft was undergoing inspection, following which a decision on resuming the journey would be made, the official added. According to Qatar Airways' website, the flight was scheduled to depart for Hong Kong from Terminal 2 of the Ahmedabad airport at 5.30 pm. *—PTI*

Nagaland govt offices crippled by pen-down strike

KOHIMA, 14 OCT

Government offices across Nagaland remained paralysed on Tuesday as the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC), representing five major employees' associations, began a three-day pen-down strike. The protest demands withdrawal of the State Government's move to induct a non-Nagaland Civil Service (NCS) officer into the IAS cadre. The controversy erupted after the government recalled a 10 March vacancy circular, allegedly to accommodate an outsider. Employee bodies insist the process must follow Office Memorandums of 2001 and 2016, requiring recruitment through open advertisement by the Nagaland Public Service Commission. *—PTI*

Jammu to start commercial paragliding in 2026

AITHAM, 14 OCT

Aitham near Jammu is set to welcome commercial paragliding by early next year, the Tourism Department announced. The site, 19 km from Jammu city, offers ideal slopes, consistent winds, and panoramic views, with land being acquired for infrastructure including restaurants, a sunset point, and a yoga platform. Twenty trained pilots, including Dolly Sharma, the only woman among them, completed advanced refresher courses and will undergo P4 training in Himachal Pradesh. "Adventure tourism will attract visitors and empower local youth, especially women," Sharma said. The initiative also aims to position Jammu as a top adventure tourism hub in North India.Officials aim to make Jammu a year-round adventure destination, boosting tourism and employment opportunities. *—PTI*

DELHI STUDENT GANGRAPED BY 4

Students protest against university admin

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

A female student at South Asian University (SAU) was allegedly sexually assaulted by four individuals on campus, prompting widespread and prolonged protests by the student body against the university administration.

The woman, reported missing on 12 October, was found injured near the university auditorium on the Chhatarpur campus on 13 October, with her clothing torn. She was rushed to a nearby hospital and is receiving counselling. Authorities said she had recently joined the varsity and had been undergoing treatment for depression following her parents' separation.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Ankit Chauhan confirmed that an FIR has been registered under relevant sections, including charges of attempted gangrape. "The investigation is being conducted with due sensitivity and priority," he said. Police have formally requested all CCTV footage from the university to trace the victim's movements after she left her hostel room prior to the alleged assault. Investigators are working to identify and apprehend the suspects as quickly as possible.

The alleged attack sparked immediate outrage among students. Peers staged an eight-hour sit-in at the administrative block on Monday evening, accusing the university of insensitivity and delays in reporting the serious crime to authorities. Many students demanded stricter security measures and better communication protocols to prevent such incidents in the future.

In response, SAU issued a statement on Tuesday condemning the incident "in the strongest terms" and assuring full support to the victim. The university reaffirmed its zero-tolerance policy on sexual harassment and all forms of violence against women, emphasising solidarity from faculty, staff, and students.

The case remains under investigation, with police stressing the need for careful handling of all evidence and witness statements to ensure justice is served. *—PTI*

Students protest after the woman, reported missing on 12 October, was found injured near the university auditorium PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

2 more held in Raebareli lynching case

RAEBARELI, 14 OCT

Two more people have been arrested in connection with the lynching of a Dalit man earlier this month in Uttar Pradesh's Raebareli district, police said on Tuesday.

The accused, identified as Chhotu alias Sujeet Agrahari and Avinesh Singh alias Saurabh Singh Baghel, both residents of Baniyan ka Purwa in Pachkhara village, were arrested on Monday and Tuesday. With these arrests, the total number of people held in the case has risen to 14.

Police said the main accused, who allegedly led the assault on the victim, Hariom Valmiki, was nabbed after an encounter on 10 October. Nine suspects were held earlier, followed by two more on 8 October.

Circle Officer (Dalmau) Girija Shankar Tripathi is leading the probe. "Efforts are on to trace others who may have fled to other districts or states. Strict action will be taken against all accused," police said.

Five policemen, including two sub-inspectors, have been suspended for dereliction of duty. Officials are also verifying social media videos linked to the crime.Valmiki, a resident of Fatehpur district, was lynched on 2 October near Jamunapur in Unchahar area after being mistaken for a thief. Both CM Yogi Adityanath and MP Rahul Gandhi have met the victim's family and assured justice. *—PTI*

60 OTHERS JOIN HIM

Major setback for Maoists as top Naxalite surrenders

GADCHIROLI, 14 OCT

In a major setback for the outlawed CPI (Maoist), senior Naxalite Mallojula Venugopal Rao, alias Bhupathi, has surrendered to police in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district along with 60 cadres, marking one of the most significant surrenders in recent years.

Bhupathi, a key strategist and Politburo member of the Maoist Central Committee, carried a bounty of Rs 6 crore and was considered one of the organisation's most influential and elusive figures. The surrender took place late on Monday at Hodri village, after which the group was escorted to the district police headquarters. They laid down 54 weapons, including seven AK-47 rifles, nine INSAS rifles, and several other arms and ammunition, in what officials described as a major breakthrough for security forces.

The 61 surrendered members include one Central Committee member, three from the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee, and ten divisional committee members.

Police sources said increasing internal rifts, leadership disputes, and dwindling support among locals had triggered widespread disillusionment within the Maoist ranks.

Senior Naxalite Mallojula Venugopal alias Bhupathi PHOTO: ANI

Bhupathi had reportedly been advocating for a shift towards peace and dialogue, arguing that the armed movement had lost public sympathy and was suffering from mounting casualties. His stance was opposed by senior leaders, leading to growing isolation and, eventually, his decision to lay down arms. Bhupathi's wife, Tarakka, a senior member of the same organisation, had also surrendered earlier this year.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the development showed the Naxal movement in the state was "on the verge of finishing," with more cadres expected to follow suit. *—PTI*

Pansare murder: 3 key suspects get bail

MUMBAI, 14 OCT

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday granted bail to three key figures, including alleged prime accused Virendrasinh Tawade, in connection with the 2015 murder of veteran rationalist and author Govind Pansare.

Justice SG Dige of the High Court's Kolhapur bench approved the bail of Tawade, Amol Kale, and Sharad Kalaskar. While Tawade and Kale are expected to walk free, Kalaskar will remain in custody due to his conviction in the 2013 murder of fellow rationalist Narendra Dabholkar. The bench declined a request from the Pansare family's lawyer to stay the order, noting that a detailed judgment would follow in the coming weeks.

Govind Pansare PHOTO: ANI

Pansare was attacked by two motorbike-borne assailants on 16 February, 2015 in Kolhapur, Maharashtra, while returning home with his wife, and succumbed to his injuries four days later. The ruling comes after six other accused were granted bail earlier this year, citing prolonged pre-trial detention and anticipated delays in the judicial process.

The investigation has faced multiple hurdles. *—PTI*

Yes to uniform: Kerala hijab row ends

KOCHI, 14 OCT

A hijab row at a Christian-run private school in Kerala appears headed for resolution after Ernakulam MP Hibi Eden said on Tuesday that the girl's father had expressed willingness to let his daughter continue studying at the school in accordance with its rules.

Authorities of St Rita's Public School, Palluruthy, were compelled to declare a two-day holiday on Monday following an escalation of a dispute with the parents of an eighth-standard student over her wearing a hijab.

The father conveyed his decision during a discussion with the school authorities in the presence of Eden and other Congress leaders on Tuesday, the MP said. The school authorities have not responded.

Eden, speaking to PTI, accused the BJP and RSS of "trying to create communal divisions" by focusing on the school over the issue. "They tried to escalate the issue," the Congress MP said.

Congress sources said the district leadership intervened after the matter was about to take a communal turn.

On Monday, a school PTA official had alleged that the parents were backed by the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), a pro-Islamist political outfit, and that its members misbehaved with the school authorities, who are mostly nuns.

The issue came to light after a letter issued by Sister Heleena Alby, the school principal, announcing holidays on Monday and Tuesday, surfaced on social media. BJP leader Shone George had visited the school on Monday and met with the management in the evening. *—PTI*

Stones hurled at Shia cleric in Lucknow

LUCKNOW, 14 OCT

Stones and bricks were thrown at Shia cleric Maulana Kalbe Jawad and his supporters when the religious leader went to inspect an alleged illegal construction at the Karbala in the Abbas Bagh area, police said.

There were no casualties. After the incident, Jawad did a sit-in protest at the site with his supporters, accusing the police of negligence. He ended his dharna after an assurance from a senior officer.

"I was targeted by the mafia elements. They also raised religious slogans to give the situation a communal colour," Jawwad told PTI. The cleric claimed he had given a police complaint against the "same elements" a few months ago, but there was no action. *—PTI*

SC grills R'than over interrogation room CCTVs

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The Supreme Court has sharply questioned the Rajasthan government over the absence of CCTV cameras in the interrogation rooms of its police stations, warning that this practice undermines human rights and leaves detainees vulnerable.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta noted that, according to the state's affidavit, no cameras were installed in the interrogation rooms, "the main place where cameras have to be there." While acknowledging installation costs, the court emphasised that surveillance in such areas is a fundamental human rights issue.

The top court is hearing a suo motu case after a media report highlighted 11 deaths

in police custody in Rajasthan during the first eight months of 2025, seven of which occurred in the Udaipur division. The bench pressed the state for details of its proposed oversight mechanism, noting that video feeds must be sent to a centralised agency for monitoring without human intervention, ensuring accountability.

Senior Advocate Siddhartha Dave, acting as amicus curiae in a related case, stressed the critical need for an independent oversight system to prevent custodial abuses. The court also referred to its December 2020 order directing installation of cameras at all entry and exit points, corridors, lock-ups, and reception areas in police stations nationwide, including offices of central investigative agencies such as the CBI and Enforcement Directorate.

The court asked the Centre and other states to respond to the amicus report and scheduled the next hearing for 24 November. Authorities have been asked to give information on the number, placement, and technical specifications of CCTV cameras across Rajasthan police stations, including night vision, audio recording, and tamper-proofing features to ensure the integrity of footage. *—PTI*

Durgapur gangrape: Cops recreate crime scene with five accused

KOLKATA, 14 OCT

West Bengal Police on Tuesday took the five men arrested in the Durgapur gangrape case, along with the survivor's friend, to the crime scene near Paranaganj Kali Bari cremation ground for a reconstruction of the incident. The second-year student from Odisha was allegedly raped there on Friday night after she went out for dinner with her friend.

A senior police officer said the entire reenactment was being videotaped to verify the statements given by the accused, the survivor, and her companion. The friend, who had accompanied the survivor on the night of the crime, was questioned for nearly an hour before the reconstruction began.

Earlier in the day, police visited the residences of two of the accused to recover clothing believed to have been worn during the assault. Similar evidence had already been seized from the other three suspects, and all the clothes will be sent for immediate forensic testing.

Investigators are also checking the backgrounds of the accused, among them a former security guard, a hospital worker, and a civic body employee, and have sent their mobile phones for digital analysis.

Meanwhile, BJP launched 'Operation Lal Mirch,' distributing red chilli powder to women in Kolkata for self-defence. The protest condemned the state's "worsening law and order," alleging Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's remarks on women venturing out late at night reflected government failure. *—PTI*

West Bengal Police personnel during reconstruction of the crime scene, in Durgapur, West Bengal on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

TO BOOST ECONOMY

Yogi govt to explore 'cow tourism'

LUCKNOW, 14 OCT

Under the guidance of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the Uttar Pradesh government has launched a major initiative to make cow shelters self-reliant. Aimed at strengthening the financial sustainability of all cow shelters across the state, the government plans to establish an ideal cow shelter in every district, which will also be developed as a tourist attraction.

As part of this effort, the concept of "cow tourism" will be explored to generate employment opportunities and additional income for residents while promoting self-reliant shelters.

To achieve this, the government will encourage the commercial use of cow-based products such as dung, urine, milk,

UP CM Yogi Adityanath's plan will have women's self-help groups play an important role in producing and marketing the products PHOTO: PTI

and ghee. Women's self-help groups will play an important role in producing and marketing cow dung-based items at the local level. Additionally, the use of cow dung lamps, idols, and other eco-friendly products will be promoted during Diwali through special awareness campaigns to boost their demand, release said.

Livestock and Dairy Development Minister Dharampal Singh stated that a large-scale campaign will be organised to promote cow dung lamps, idols, and decorative items during Deepavali. He assured that these products will be made widely available in markets to support the spirit of "Vocal for Local".

Principal Secretary, Livestock and Dairy Development, Mukesh Meshram, informed that officials have been instructed to prepare local-level plans for the commercial utilisation of cow dung and urine in cow shelters. This initiative is expected to give a new dimension to cow protection in Uttar Pradesh while promoting indigenous industries and sustainable livelihoods through cow-based products. *—ANI*

10 students booked for honouring GN Saibaba

MUMBAI, 14 OCT

Police have registered a case against ten students of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Mumbai for allegedly organising an unauthorised event on campus to mark the first death anniversary of former Delhi University professor GN Saibaba.

According to officials, the gathering took place on Sunday at the institute's Chembur campus without permission from the authorities. During the event, some participants allegedly raised slogans supporting former Jawaharlal Nehru University students Sharjeel Imam and Umar Khalid, who are currently in jail in connection with a Delhi riots case.

Saibaba, earlier arrested for alleged Maoist links, was acquitted by Bombay High Court in 2024 after years in prison. He died on 12 October last year.

Following a complaint by TISS administration, Trombay police filed an FIR on Monday against the students. They face charges including unlawful assembly, promoting enmity between groups, and acts prejudicial to national harmony. Police said formal notices have been issued to the accused students, who have been asked to appear for questioning this week. *—PTI*

WHISKER NATION

Cyprus, the small island nation in the Mediterranean, is estimated to have roughly one feral cat for every one of its 1 million inhabitants. But activists contend the actual population is hundreds of thousands higher. Officials are now scrabbling to ensure mass sterilisation and are likely to raise funds for the same. Cyprus has long been a cat-loving nation with food dispensaries and tiny houses all over. AP

Is Trump's 'shock & awe' foreign policy sustainable?

Donald Trump's Secretary of State Marco Rubio, now also serves as his national security adviser. He has reduced the staff of the National Security Council from around 350 to about 150 ***PHOTO: EPA***

US President Donald Trump visits Israel and Egypt this week to oversee the initial implementation of his Gaza peace agreement, which many hope will permanently end the two-year war in the strip.

Should the peace hold, the Gaza accord will be Trump's greatest foreign policy achievement, even surpassing the Abraham Accords of his first term that normalised relations between Israel and several Arab countries.

Given the speed with which the Trump administration has helped to negotiate the ceasefire, it is an opportune moment to assess Trump's frenetic foreign policy at the start of his second presidential term.

The "Trump Doctrine" – the unconventional, high-energy and fast-moving approach to world affairs now pursued by the United States – has had some significant achievements, most notably in Gaza. But are these breakthroughs sustainable, and can his foreign policy approach be effective with larger geostrategic challenges?

A leaner decision -making structure

One way the Trump administration's approach is different from previous administrations – including Trump 1.0 – is in his leaner organisation, which is more capable of implementing quick action.

Trump has revamped the national security decision-making structure in surprising ways. His secretary of state, Marco Rubio, now serves concurrently as his national security adviser. Rubio has also reduced the staff of the National Security Council from around 350 to about 150, which is still larger than many of Trump's predecessors before Barack Obama.

With a much smaller staff now, Rubio is implementing a more sustainable method for the president to communicate with his top advisers, mostly through Rubio himself and Trump's powerful chief of staff, Susie Wiles.

A reliance on special envoys

To set the stage for his own deal-making, Trump also uses his longtime friend and multi-purpose envoy, Steve Witkoff, for the highest-level conversations. Without any Senate confirmation, Witkoff has become Trump's most trusted voice in Ukraine, Gaza and several other foreign policy negotiations.

Massad Boulos, another unconfirmed Trump envoy, conducts second-tier negotiations, mostly in Africa but also parts of the Middle East.

Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, played a key role in the recent Gaza accord as well.

A 'shock and awe' approach

On top of all this, of course, is Trump's style and showmanship.

His most controversial statements – for example, demanding US ownership of Greenland – may seem absurd and offensive at first. However, there are genuine national security concerns over China's role in the Arctic and the possibility an independent Greenland might serve as a wedge in a critical region.

What is unique to Trump is the pace, breadth and intensity of his personal diplomacy.

Trump's relationship with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is a case in point. While Trump embraces Netanyahu in public and green-lights all of Israel's military actions, he's willing to say no to the Israeli leader in private. For example, Trump intervened to prevent Israel from annexing the West Bank immediately before the Gaza breakthrough.

In addition, Trump's personal charm offensive with Arab leaders in the region – his first major foreign trip after Pope Francis' funeral was to Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – established a coalition to pressure Hamas to say yes to the deal.

It is a "shock and awe" diplomatic approach: everything, everywhere, all at once. Previous agreements and norms (including those set by Trump himself) are downplayed or discarded in favour of action in the moment.

Is there a longer -term vision?

It remains to be seen whether Trump's approach can lead to a long-term solution in Gaza. Many critics have pointed out the vagueness in his 20-point peace plan, which could cause it to fall apart at any moment.

It is not unusual for a second-term American president like Trump to focus on foreign policy, where Congress has a highly limited role and the president has wide latitude. But American presidents usually focus on achieving one big thing. Think Obama's nuclear deal with Iran or George W. Bush's troop surge in Iraq.

Today, in addition to the Gaza accord, Trump is pursuing separate diplomatic deals with all four major American adversaries: China, Russia, Iran and North Korea.

The logic of this is to put direct stress on the alliance of bad actors. Does Chinese leader Xi Jinping trust Russian President Vladimir Putin enough to resist Trump's entreaties, and vice versa? How much are Russia and China worried about North Korean leader Kim Jong Un cutting a deal with Washington?

The true test of the Trump Doctrine will not be the success of the Gaza accord, but whether he can build on it to drive the West's adversaries – mainly China and Russia – apart from each other and into weaker strategic positions. *—The Conversation*

SALAR ساڈا

Covid-19 may alter offspring's brain dvpt

PHOTO: PTI

Changes in sperm caused by Covid-19 in a mouse could affect the offspring's brain development and cause anxious behaviours, a study has found, suggesting that the viral disease may have long-lasting effects on future generations, even as the results would need to be verified in humans, researchers said.

The team from Australia's Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health found that an offspring mouse conceived after a father has been infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus and developed Covid-19 symptoms have higher levels of anxiety-like behaviours.

"We let male mice recover from SARS-CoV-2 infection for a few weeks before they mated with healthy females. We found that the resulting offspring showed more anxious behaviours compared to offspring from uninfected fathers," Elizabeth Kleeman, research officer and first author of the study published in the journal Nature Communications, said.

All offsprings from Covid-19-affected fathers were seen to display increased anxiety-like behaviours.

"Using an established mouse-adapted SARS-CoV-2 preclinical model, we infected adult male mice with the virus, or performed a mock control infection, and bred them with naive female mice four weeks later, when males were no longer infectious. Here we show that offspring of infected sires display increased anxiety-like behaviours," the authors wrote.

Lead researcher Anthony Hannan said it is known that male mice exposed to adverse environmental and lifestyle factors, such as consuming a poor diet before mating, can change brain development and behaviour in offsprings.

"This is because the father's experiences can alter the information carried in sperm, including specific RNA molecules, which transmit instructions for offspring development," Hannan said.

Analysis of RNA gene material from infected fathers' sperm showed altered molecules, including those involved in regulating genes known to be important for brain development.

Female offspring mice also had significant changes in how specific genes in the brain's hippocampus region -- important for regulating emotional responses such as anxiety and stress -- behaved, the study found.

"These kinds of changes in the hippocampus, as well as other brain regions, may contribute to the increased anxiety we observed in offspring, via epigenetic inheritance and altered brain development," co-senior author Carolina Gubert said. Epigenetics refers to the process by which a gene interacts with the environment to produce an observable behaviour.

Hannan said the study is the first of its kind, and added that if the results are verified in humans, millions of children and families worldwide could be impacted, "with major implications for public health".

"While more research is needed, particularly in the sperm and offspring of humans infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, these findings suggest that the Covid-19 pandemic could have long-lasting effects on future generations," the lead researcher said.

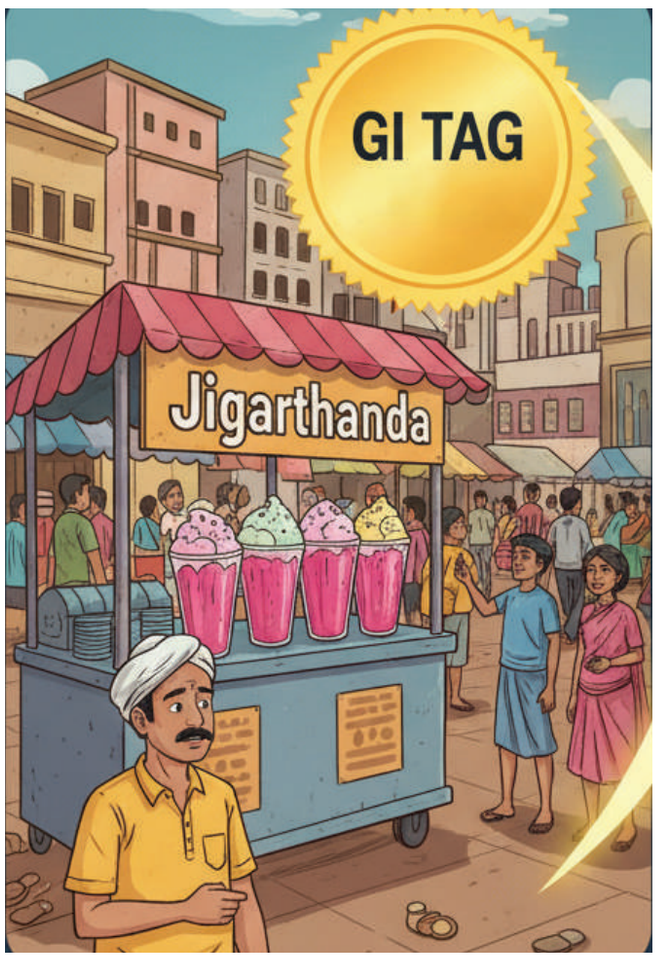
"Our discoveries highlight the importance of understanding the impacts of this virus and infectious disease, not only on those directly infected, but also on their children who may be affected by their parent's experience with Covid-19," Hannan added. *—PTI*

A study suggests that the viral disease may have long-lasting effects on future generations, even as the results would need to be verified in humans ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Beyond 'Jigarthanda': How GI tag 'rescues' lesser known products



Geographical Indication (GI) tag filed for the lip-smacking Madurai 'Jigarthanda', a cold drink made from condensed milk, may grab headlines, but it is relatively obscure products like 'kuliyadichan sivappu arisi' (parboiled red rice) that gain the most from the certification, said stakeholders.

Ask C Natarajan from Kallakurichi, who has been carving wood for 44 years now, having come into the craft when he was a mere 12-year-old, and he'll tell you of a time when middle men ruled the roost.

"They paid us a pittance," added 56-year-old Natarajan.

Things improved marginally with the involvement of the Department of Handicrafts, Tamil Nadu government, according to him.

"We could earn a bit better, but we were expected to go to those exhibitions that were organised across the country. It cut into our production time," Natarajan told PTI over the phone.

All that changed in 2021, when Kallakurichi wood carving, a specialised technique of wood carving that is traced back to Chola period, and yet languishing for lack of market, was awarded the GI tag.

"Earlier, only a handful of us were able to support ourselves fully with our craft. But after the GI tag, all of us — about 200 families in Kallakurichi — make a comfortable living now. More importantly, the customers come to us, giving us time to concentrate on our craft," said Natarajan.

Although not as enthusiastic as Natarajan, third generation Thanjavur Veenai manufacturer Venkatesan said after the GI tag, which was awarded this year, his customer base has certainly expanded.

"Until recently, outside of Tamil Nadu, we used to get occasional customers from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, at the most. Now we are getting many outside enquiries. More people, not just from India, but also abroad, seem to know what a Thanjavur Veenai is," added Venkatesan.

Incidentally, Thanjavur Veenai holds the distinction of being the first musical instrument to get the GI tag.

This is possible because of enhanced brand visibility, said S Vincent, Member Secretary, Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology (TNSCST), which plays an important role in the identification and protection of potential GI products in Tamil Nadu.

"It didn't happen overnight, but in the last two years we were more successful than when we started in the early 2000s. We are able to get the younger generation involved," added Vincent.

The real challenge is in marketing products that are not known outside of the immediate region where the product originates. This is when a validation like GI tag can do wonders ***PHOTO: WIKICOMMONS***

In Natarajan's case, for instance, his son is fully involved in marketing their wood carvings online through various social media pages, especially Instagram reels.

Vishnupriya, project scientist at TNSCST, who is leading the GI tag promotion team, said Tamil Nadu now leads when it comes to the number of GI applications filed every year.

"To date, we have filed 7,541 GI tag applications. In comparison, Maharashtra has filed 5,309 and Karnataka 4,346 applications," added Vishnupriya.

This year, Tamil Nadu has filed 14 GI tag applications so far, she said.

K Ganesh Murthy, Executive Director and CEO of MABIF, a platform for marketing GI tagged agricultural produce and food products from Tamil Nadu, established with the help of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), said the real challenge is in marketing products that are not known outside of the immediate region where the product originates. This is when a validation like GI tag can do wonders, he added. Perhaps that is why Sholavandan 'Vetrilai', a famous betel leaf supposedly with medicinal properties from Madurai, which even finds mention in Sangam literature, is yet to get a GI tag, lesser known Athoor 'Vetrilai' from Tuticorin already was awarded one in 2023.

Murthy said it is not guaranteed that GI tag will be awarded once the filing is done.

Vishnupriya said of the 7,541 GI applications filed from Tamil Nadu, 71 have received GI certifications so far.

"But it is worth the effort because there is at least a 10 per cent to 15 per cent growth in revenue with a GI tag. One of the reasons why farmers particularly are showing more interest in getting their culturally significant products registered,"said Murthy.

Once a product is identified for GI tag, it also piques the interest of academic researchers, as Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) cells are set up in higher education institutions to process GI applications, said Vincent. Till now, about 40 IPR cells are set up in various universities and colleges of Tamil Nadu, he added.

For instance, when Kollimalai Coffee was identified as potential GI tag product, researchers from K S Rangasamy College of Technology, Tiruchengode, where the GI application was processed, worked along with the coffee growers to develop a AI powered drone to observe the incidences of diseases and the geology, helping them to enhance production, said Vincent.

"Another example is the RTPCR kit developed by Mother Teresa Women's University Kodaikanal researchers, which can verify the authenticity of GI-tagged Kodaikanal Malai Poondi (garlic), preventing adulteration," he said. *—PTI*

End old feuds: Trump tells Middle East

'Last chance of peace' for Gaza: World leaders

From left, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, US President Donald Trump, Emir of Qatar Cheikh Tamim ben Hamad al-Thani, King Abdullah II of Jordan, and fellow dignitaries at the Gaza International Peace Summit, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, 14 OCT

US President Donald Trump on Monday called for a new era of harmony in the Middle East during a global summit on Gaza's future, seeking to advance regional peace after visiting Israel to mark a US-brokered ceasefire with Hamas.

"We have a once-in-a-lifetime chance to put old feuds and hatreds behind us," Trump said, urging leaders to ensure the future is not "ruled by the fights of generations past."

The whirlwind trip, which included a Knesset address in Jerusalem and the Cairo summit hosted by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, comes amid cautious optimism after two years of war between Israel and Hamas. "Everybody said it's not possible. It is happening before your very eyes," Trump said beside el-Sissi.

Nearly three dozen nations from Europe and the Middle East attended, though Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declined.

Trump, el-Sissi, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Qatari Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani signed a joint vision statement, described as a roadmap for Gaza's reconstruction and long-term stability.

El-Sissi called Trump's plan the "last chance" for peace and reiterated support for a two-state solution.

While Trump's proposal allows for a Palestinian state after a transition and reform period, he avoided mentioning it in his address.

El-Sissi told Trump "only you" can deliver peace, as his office said the summit sought to "end the war" and "open a new page of regional stability" aligned with President Trump's vision. *—PTI*

Modi great friend: Don; Shariff backs Don for Nobel

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, 14 OCT

Trump heaped praise on Pakistan, while calling Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi his "great friend".

He said that Pakistan's Army Chief Asim Munir was his "favourite" Field Marshal, while adding that Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was instrumental in securing peace in Gaza.

Sharif, who stood behind Trump during the latter's speech, said that Pakistan had nominated the US President for a Nobel Peace Prize for his role in helping ease tensions between India and Pakistan.

During his address, President Trump said, "India is a great country with a very good friend of mine at the top and he's just done a fantastic job and I think Pakistan and India are going to live very nicely together." He then turned to Sharif and asked, "Right?" Both the leaders shared a brief laugh. "They will, they will," Trump said. "They're two great... I tell you... leaders, great leaders as far as I'm concerned." *—PTI*

President Donald Trump listens as Pakistan's PM Shehbaz Sharif speaks in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

Trump to host Argentina's Prez on $20 bn bailout

BUENOS AIRES, 14 OCT

Argentina's Libertarian leader is lavishing praise on US President Donald Trump ahead of his first White House meeting with Trump on Tuesday.

It's a tactic that has helped transform President Javier Milei's cash-strapped country into one of the Trump administration's closest allies. "Your commitment to life, freedom and peace has restored hope to the world," Milei wrote on social media Monday, congratulating the US President Trump on securing a ceasefire deal in Gaza.

The Trump-Milei bromance has already paid off for Argentina — most recently, to the tune of a USD 20 billion bailout. Experts say Argentine President Javier Milei arrives at the White House with two key goals, negotiating tariff exemptions or reductions to boost trade, and discussing how Washington will implement a proposed USD 20 billion currency swap line aimed at stabilising the peso. The move seeks to bolster Argentina's shrinking foreign reserves and restore investor confidence ahead of elections later this month. *—PTI*

NEPAL STUDENT'S BODY REACHES ISRAEL FOR REPATRIATION

KATHMANDU, 14 OCT

The body of Bipin Joshi, 23, a Nepali student celebrated for saving 17 lives during the 7 October Hamas attack, has arrived in Tel Aviv, alongside the remains of 20 other hostages who died in captivity. Joshi, who was participating in Israel's Learn and Earn Programme, was abducted from a shelter in Kibbutz Alumim. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) confirmed he was likely killed in captivity during the early months of the conflict.

During the attack, two grenades were thrown into the room where Joshi and 16 others were sheltering. His friend, Bibhusha Adhikari, recounted how Joshi heroically picked up and threw the grenades back, saving the lives of all those present.

His family's hopes for his safe return were dashed when his name did not appear on the list of surviving hostages.

Israeli authorities informed the Nepali Ambassador of his death. The IDF expressed deep condolences and said arrangements are underway to return Joshi's body to Nepal, ensuring he receives a proper burial and recognition for his bravery during one of the deadliest attacks in recent history. *—PTI*

Bipin Joshi was captured by Hamas on October 7, 2023

Trump calls 'young' Meloni beautiful

Trump called Italian PM Giogia Meloni – the only woman in the gathering - "beautiful" on stage. "We have a woman, a young woman who's... I'm not allowed to say it because usually it's the end of your political career if you say it: she's a beautiful young woman," Trump said.

Trump asks Israeli Prez to pardon Bibi in graft case

Trump called on the Israeli President to pardon Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whom he described as "one of the greatest" wartime leaders. Netanyahu faces corruption charges, although several hearings have been postponed during the conflict with Hamas.

Trump snubs Starmer on stage

Trump invited British Prime Minister Keir Starmer to the stage to shake his hand. Starmer appeared like he wanted to speak, but was blocked by Trump. Starmer has said he will pledge 20 million British pounds to help provide water and sanitation for Gaza.

California signs law protecting minors from AI threats

SACRAMENTO, 14 OCT

California Governor Gavin Newsom has signed a landmark law aimed at strengthening safeguards for children and teenagers engaging with artificial intelligence chatbots.

Under the new legislation, AI platforms must clearly inform users every three hours that they are conversing with a bot, not a human.

Companies are also required to create systems that block self-harm content and immediately connect users expressing suicidal thoughts to crisis helplines. Newsom said the measure was necessary to ensure accountability, warning, "Emerging technology can exploit, mislead, and endanger our kids." While hailed as a step toward safer AI use, several children's advocacy groups criticised the law as too lenient and shaped by industry lobbying. Recent studies have linked chatbot conversations to rising instances of self-harm among minors, demanding stricter oversight. *—PTI*

14 killed in Venezuelan mine collapse after rains

CARACAS, 14 OCT

At least 14 miners perished in a devastating mine collapse in El Callao, Venezuela, following torrential rains that struck the southeast region, authorities confirmed on Monday. A command post has been established to coordinate recovery operations for the victims, led by Brigadier General Gregory González Acevedo, head of the Operational Zones for Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis (ZOEDAN) in Bolívar state. The fatalities occurred across three different shafts of the "Cuatro Esquinas de Caratal" mine, situated approximately 850km southeast of Caracas. Search and rescue efforts commenced with "the pumping out of all the shafts in the area to lower the water level, and then evaluating rescue efforts" for those trapped inside, according to the agency's statement. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Swift's new album sells record 4M copies in 1 week

NEW YORK, 14 OCT

Taylor Swift's latest album, 'The Life of a Showgirl,' has shattered records by selling 4.002 million equivalent album units in its first week in the US, the highest first-week total in modern music history. This achievement surpasses Adele's '25,' which sold 3.378 million copies in its debut week. Released on 3 October, the album recorded 3,479,500 in pure sales. Swift has now accumulated 15 No. 1 albums on the Billboard 200, just behind The Beatles' 19. The album also set a crucial record for vinyl sales, moving 1.2 million copies right in its first day. Additionally, Swift's upcoming Disney+ projects promise to keep her at the forefront of the industry. *—PTI*

Alec Baldwin crashes into a tree, escapes unhurt

LOS ANGELES, 14 OCT

Actor Alec Baldwin and his brother Stephen Baldwin were involved in a car accident on Monday afternoon. Hours after the incident, Alec took to Instagram and shared a video, updating his fans about what actually happened. In the video, he said that he was with his brother Stephen when he crashed his wife Hilaria's white Range Rover into a tree in the Hamptons. Alec said the "biggest garbage truck" he'd ever seen cut him off and he swerved to avoid hitting it, as reported by Page Six. He assured fans he was fine. "I crushed my wife's car, I feel bad about that but it's all fine," he said. *—ANI*

China hits 5 US ports in S Korea

BEIJING/SEOUL, 13 OCT

China imposed sanctions on five US-linked subsidiaries of South Korean Hanwha Ocean Corporation, in response to Washington's probe into China's maritime, logistics, and shipbuilding industries, according to an official statement.

The sanctions, announced by China's Ministry of Commerce, took effect on Tuesday. The Chinese Commerce Ministry said that the US actions "seriously violate international law and the basic norms governing international relations, and gravely undermine the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises."

> **He (Trump) will be meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Korea... I believe that meeting will still be on.**
>
> —Scott Bessent, US Treasury Secretary

It added that the US subsidiaries of the Hanwha Ocean Corporation have "assisted and supported investigations conducted by the US government, endangering China's sovereignty, security and development interests."

The sanctions come amidst US President Donald Trump's threat to increase tariffs on China by 100 per cent and attempt to build shipbuilding cooperation between Seoul and Washington. *—ANI*

Venezuela closes Norway embassy after Nobel

OSLO, 14 OCT

Venezuela has closed its embassy in Oslo, citing a foreign service restructuring, days after opposition leader María Corina Machado won the Nobel Peace Prize for promoting democratic rights.

Caracas made no mention of the award in its statement, but Norway's foreign ministry called the move "regrettable," saying it still hoped to maintain dialogue.

Corina Machado hailed the Nobel Peace Prize as "an injection of energy, hope, and strength" for Venezuelans, saying it reaffirmed that "we are not alone."

President Nicolás Maduro dismissed her as a "demonic witch."

Amid strained ties with the United States, Venezuela also shut down its embassy in Australia while opening new missions in Zimbabwe and Burkina Faso, which it called "strategic partners."

The closures mark another step in the government's diplomatic realignment amid growing political and international tensions. *—Agencies*

Firefighters attempt to douse fire using water guns following glide bomb and drone attack by Russian forces, hitting a hospital and wounding seven people **PHOTO: X @ZELENSKYYUA**

Russian attack hits Ukrainian hospital

KYIV, 14 OCT

Russian forces struck Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, overnight with powerful glide bombs and drones, hitting a hospital and wounding seven people, officials said Tuesday. Regional head Oleh Syniehubov said the attack damaged the city's main hospital, forcing the evacuation of 50 patients. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the strikes mainly targeted energy facilities. "Every day, every night, Russia strikes power plants, power lines, and our gas facilities," he wrote on Telegram. Ukrainian officials condemned the assault as another attempt to cripple essential infrastructure ahead of winter.

ZELENSKYY TO VISIT US THIS WEEK

Zelenskyy said he will travel to Washington this week to meet US President Donald Trump, seeking more military aid, including long-range weapons. "The main topics will be air defence and our long-range capabilities, to maintain pressure on Russia," he said. Trump recently warned Moscow that the US could provide Ukraine with Tomahawk missiles, enabling deeper strikes inside Russian territory. *—PTI*

GEN Z TOPPLED GOVT

Madagascar army seizes power as Prez flees

ANTANANARIVO, 14 OCT

Madagascar President Andry A colonel in an elite military unit announced Tuesday that Madagascar's armed forces have taken control of the country, following weeks of anti-government protests and a rebellion within the army.

The announcement came shortly after parliament voted to impeach President Andry Rajoelina, who fled Madagascar amid fears for his life.

Col. Michael Randrianirina told reporters the military would form a council composed of army and gendarmerie officers, and a prime minister would be appointed to "quickly" establish a civilian government. His declaration appeared to mark the end of Rajoelina's seven-year rule.

Thousands of Gen Z-led protesters rallied in Antananarivo over the weekend, demanding the resignation of Rajoelina and others **PHOTO: X**

Rajoelina addressed the nation late Monday via a national television broadcast from an undisclosed location, explaining he had fled due to the military rebellion but did not formally resign. "I was forced to find a safe place to protect my life," he said. His comments followed an attempt by the CAPSAT military unit to seize the state broadcaster and join thousands of Gen Z-led protesters rallying in Antananarivo over the weekend, demanding the resignation of Rajoelina and other ministers.

The unrest, which began on 25 September over chronic water and electricity shortages, escalated into widespread opposition to Rajoelina's government. Observers note this is the most significant political crisis since Rajoelina first came to power following a 2009 military-backed coup.

Rajoelina urged dialogue to resolve the situation but did not disclose how he left the country or his current location.

Reports suggest he was flown out on a French military plane, reflecting longstanding tensions over his dual French-Malagasy citizenship.*—PTI*

Pak govt suspends all ties with Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD, 14 OCT

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif announced suspension of direct and indirect ties with Kabul after border clashes that killed 23 Pakistani troops. He said the situation was a stalemate and warned hostilities could resume at any time, insisting Pakistan must maintain its defences.

The conflict began late on Saturday, with the Inter-Services Public Relations describing an "unprovoked attack" from the Afghan side. Asif defended Pakistan's response, saying forces struck terrorist hideouts and training camps, not populated areas, and claimed more than 200 militants were neutralised.

He accused Afghanistan of sheltering a "conglomerate" of international terrorism, including ISIS, al-Qaeda and the TTP, and said dialogue under threat was unacceptable.

Afghanistan described its action as retaliatory, alleging Pakistan had carried out air strikes earlier in the week; Islamabad has not confirmed those strikes.

The ISPR said 29 soldiers were wounded, 21 hostile positions were briefly captured and several camps were rendered inoperative. Asif reiterated that Kabul must stop harbouring militants, and affirmed the armed forces' resolve to protect Pakistan's territorial integrity and citizens at all costs. *—ANI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Rupee revisits all-time low of 88.8 against USD

MUMBAI, 14 OCT

The rupee depreciated 12 paise to revisit its all-time low of 88.80 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, weighed down by negative domestic equities and overnight gains in the American currency. Forex traders said foreign fund outflows amid a risk-off mode globally further dented investor sentiment. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 88.73 against the greenback and fell to an intraday low of 88.81 and a high of 88.73. It finally closed the day at 88.80 against the greenback, registering a decline of 12 paise over its previous close of 88.68. On 30 September, the rupee had fallen to an all-time low of 88.80 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index was trading 0.10 per cent higher at 99.36. *—PTI*

Tata Trusts backs Chandrasekaran as Chairman

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Tata Trusts, which holds a 66 per cent controlling stake in Tata Sons, has recommended a third term for N Chandrasekaran as Chairman of the group's principal holding company, sources said. The recommendation comes amid reports of internal divisions among trustees over governance and board appointments. It is now up to the Tata Sons board to approve the proposal. Questions remain over whether Chandrasekaran would continue in an executive capacity, as Tata Group rules require executives to step down at 65, though non-executive roles may be held until 70. Chandrasekaran took charge in February 2017 following the dismissal of Cyrus Mistry. Since then, he has led major strategic initiatives, including the acquisition and turnaround of Air India and the launch of the Tata Neu super app. *—PTI*

GST cut may cost J&K ₹1,000 cr: Omar Abdullah

SRINAGAR, 14 OCT

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said Jammu and Kashmir could lose up to Rs 1,000 crore in revenue this fiscal due to the recent revision in GST rates. Addressing FICCI's national executive meeting in Srinagar, he said the state's economy had also been hit by the Pahalgam terror attack and heavy summer rains. "The GST revision alone will cut earnings by Rs 900 to Rs 1,000 crore, a big blow for a deficit state," Abdullah said. He noted that torrential rains from July to September severely damaged agriculture and horticulture. Calling the Pahalgam attack a setback to tourism and perception, he added, "We came close to the lowest point earlier this year, but the direction now is positive." *—PTI*

PM Surya Ghar achieves only 13% solar goal

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

India has installed around 4.9 gigawatts of residential rooftop solar capacity under the Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Yojana (PMSGY), with over 57.9 lakh applications submitted as of July 2025, according to a report by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) and JMK Research & Analytics. Despite a nearly fourfold rise in applications since March 2024, only 13.1 per cent of the government's target of one crore installations has been achieved, and merely 14.1 per cent of the allocated Rs 65,700 crore in subsidies has been disbursed. Gujarat leads with 1,491 megawatts, followed by Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Rajasthan. *—PTI*

Wholesale price inflation eases to 0.13% in Sept

The data shows deflation in food articles at 5.22% in Sept

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Wholesale price inflation (WPI) softened to 0.13 per cent in September on easing in prices of food articles and manufactured items, government data showed on Tuesday.

WPI-based inflation was 0.52 per cent in August and 1.91 per cent in September last year.

"Positive rate of inflation in September 2025 is primarily due to an increase in prices of the manufacture of food products, other manufacturing, non-food articles, other transport equipment and textiles, etc," the industry ministry said in a statement.

According to WPI data, deflation in food articles was 5.22 per cent in September, compared to 3.06 per cent in August, with vegetables experiencing a decline in prices.

Deflation in vegetables was 24.41 per cent in September, as against 14.18 per cent in August.

WPI-based inflation was 0.52 per cent in August and 1.91 per cent in September last year *PHOTO: FREEPIK*

In the case of manufactured products, inflation eased to 2.33 per cent, as against 2.55 per cent in August.

Fuel and power witnessed a negative inflation or deflation of 2.58 per cent in September, as against 3.17 per cent in the previous month.

Barclays India Chief Economist Aastha Gudwani said that amid generally lower global commodity prices, WPI inflation is expected to stay subdued for longer.

India Ratings and Research, Associate Director, Paras Jasrai, said core inflation rose to a 31-month high of 1.9 per cent in September 2025, driven by a record pace of jewellery price growth at 34.1 per cent year-over-year.

PHDCCI, CEO & Secretary General, Ranjeet Mehta, said the low overall inflation in September was primarily driven by fall in food and primary article prices.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which takes into account retail inflation, had kept benchmark policy rates unchanged at 5.5 per cent earlier this month.

Retail inflation fell to an 8-year low of 1.5 per cent in September, the official data released on Monday showed. *—PTI*

Sensex drops by 297 points, Nifty lowers by 81.8 points

MUMBAI, 14 OCT

Benchmark BSE Sensex fell by 297 points on Tuesday in its second straight day of losses due to selling in metal, select auto and pharma shares amid weak trends in Asian and European markets.

Reversing its early gains, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 297.07 points or 0.36 per cent to settle at 82,029.98 as 23 of its constituents closed lower and seven with gains. During the day, it dropped 545.43 points or 0.66 per cent to 81,781.62.

The 50-share NSE Nifty went lower by 81.85 points or 0.32 per cent to 25,145.50.

Stock markets started the day on a high note but failed to hold momentum due to weak global trends and trade-related concerns, analysts said, adding that foreign fund outflows also impacted the sentiment.

PHOTO: PTI

Bajaj Finance was the biggest loser among Sensex stocks, dropping by 1.8 per cent. Tata Motors, TCS, Tata Steel, Bharat Electronics, NTPC, Trent, Asian Paints and Axis Bank were also among the laggards.

However, Tech Mahindra, ICICI Bank, Power Grid, Hindustan Unilever and Reliance Industries were among the gainers.

The BSE smallcap gauge dropped 0.95 per cent and midcap index declined 0.74 per cent.

As many as 2,870 stocks declined, 1,337 advanced and 127 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite Index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended lower. Markets in Europe were trading lower.

US markets ended sharply higher on Monday. *—PTI*

Govt extends tenure for 16th Finance Commission

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The Indian government has extended the tenure of the 16th Finance Commission by one month, moving the submission deadline of its final report to 30 November. The panel was originally due to submit recommendations by 31 October. Constituted on 31 December, 2023, the constitutional body is chaired by economist and former Niti Aayog vice-chairman Arvind Panagariya. Its main mandate is to suggest the distribution of tax revenues between the Centre and states for the five-year period starting 1 April, 2026. The Commission comprises four members, assisted by Secretary Ritvik Pandey, two joint secretaries and an economic advisor. The extension allows the Commission additional time to finalise this critical blueprint, which will guide Centre-state fiscal relations for next five years. *—PTI*

LG marks stunning debut, shares jump over 48%

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Shares of LG Electronics India Ltd on Tuesday made a stunning market debut and ended with a premium of over 48 per cent, against the issue price of Rs 1,140.

The stock started trading at Rs 1,715, surging 50.43 per cent from the issue price on the BSE. During the day, it zoomed 52.31 per cent to Rs 1,736.40. Shares of the firm ended at Rs 1,689.40, up 48.19 per cent.

On the NSE, the stock made its market debut at Rs 1,710.10, registering a premium of 50 per cent. Shares of the firm later ended 48.23 per cent higher at Rs 1,689.90.

The company's market valuation stood at Rs 1,14,671.81 crore.

In volume terms, 78.56 lakh shares of the firm were traded on the BSE and 687.94 lakh shares exchanged hands on the NSE during the day.

The initial public offering of LG Electronics India Ltd received 54.02 times subscription on the final day of bidding on Thursday, driven by overwhelming participation from institutional buyers.

PHOTO: ANI

The Rs 11,607-crore IPO had a price band of Rs 1,080 to Rs 1,140 per share.

The IPO was entirely an Offer-For-Sale (OFS) of 10.18 crore shares, representing about 15 per cent stake, by the South Korea-based parent.

LG Electronics India is a leading player in major home appliances and consumer electronics. The company's products are sold to both B2C and B2B customers in India and abroad. *—PTI*

NPCI signs MoU for introduction of UPI in Japan

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL) has signed a memorandum of understanding with NTT DATA Japan to introduce Unified Payments Interface (UPI) acceptance across Japan, allowing Indian tourists to make seamless digital payments during their visits.

According to the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), the agreement will enable travellers from India to pay at merchant locations acquired by NTT DATA by scanning QR codes through their familiar UPI applications.

The partnership marks a significant milestone in strengthening digital financial connectivity between India and Japan.

It aims to enhance convenience for Indian visitors while promoting the adoption of the innovative payment systems in the Japanese market. *—PTI*

Gold breaches ₹1.3L/10g, silver hits new high of ₹1.8L/kg

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Gold prices on Tuesday surged by Rs 2,850 to breach the Rs 1.3 lakh per 10g-mark for the first time in the national capital, driven by heavy festive buying by retailers and jewellers ahead of 'Dhanteras'.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity jumped Rs 2,850 to a record of Rs 1,30,800 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes) against the previous close of Rs 1,27,950.

Silver also surged by Rs 6,000 to hit a lifetime high of Rs 1,85,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes), marking its fifth consecutive day of gains.

The white metal had settled at Rs 1,79,000 per kg in the previous market session.

In the international market, spot gold retreated from record highs but remained elevated, trading 0.72 per cent higher at USD 4,140.34 per ounce after touching an all-time high of USD 4,179.71 per ounce earlier in the day.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

- According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity jumped Rs 2,850 to a record of Rs 1,30,800 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes) against the previous close of Rs 1,27,950. Silver also surged by Rs 6,000 to hit a lifetime high of Rs 1,85,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes), marking its fifth consecutive day of gains.

Spot silver also pulled back after hitting a lifetime high of USD 53.54 per ounce and was last quoting 1.92 per cent lower at USD 51.36 per ounce. *—PTI*

10 GIGAWATT ACCELERATORS

OpenAI, Broadcom partner to design custom AI chips

SAN FRANCISCO, 14 OCT

OpenAI said Monday it is working with chipmaker Broadcom to design its own artificial intelligence computer chips.

The two California companies didn't disclose the financial terms of the deal but said they will start deploying the new racks of customised "AI accelerators" late next year.

It's the latest big deal between OpenAI, maker of ChatGPT, and the companies building the chips and data centres required to power AI.

OpenAI, in recent weeks, has announced partnerships with chipmakers Nvidia and AMD that will supply the AI startup with specialised chips for running its AI systems. OpenAI has also made big deals with Oracle, CoreWeave and other companies developing the data centres where those chips are housed.

Many of the deals rely on circular financing, in which the companies are both investing in OpenAI and supplying the world's most valuable startup with technology, fueling concerns about an AI bubble.

OpenAI doesn't yet turn a profit but says its products now have more than 800 million weekly users.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman said the work with Broadcom to develop a custom chip began about 18 months ago. Broadcom also works with other leading AI developers, including tech giants Amazon and Google.

Altman said on a podcast announcing the deal that the computing power made possible through the Broadcom partnership will amount to 10 gigawatts. *—PTI*

SpaceX Starship completes 11th test flight

WASHINGTON, 14 OCT

SpaceX has successfully launched the 11th test flight of its colossal Starship rocket from its Starbase facility at the southern tip of Texas, marking another milestone for the reusable vehicle.

The 123-metre-tall rocket, the largest and most powerful ever built, thundered into the evening sky before following a similar trajectory to its successful August mission. The Super Heavy booster separated and performed a controlled descent into the Gulf of Mexico, while the Starship spacecraft skimmed through space for over an hour before splashing down in the Indian Ocean. No parts were recovered.

Starship carried eight mock Starlink satellites, demonstrating progress towards operational goals. The flight included more complex manoeuvring than previous tests, particularly during re-entry, as SpaceX practised future landings.

Founder Elon Musk envisions Starship carrying humans to Mars, while NASA plans to use the vehicle to land astronauts on the Moon by the end of the decade as part of its Artemis programme. *—PTI*

Direct tax collections rise by 2.36% in FY26

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

India's gross direct tax collections have risen 2.36 per cent so far in the current financial year (FY26) up to 12 October, according to the Income Tax Department.

Total gross collections reached Rs 13,92,161.49 crore. Corporate Tax led the growth, increasing by around Rs 30,000 crore to Rs 6,42,658.28 crore. Non-corporate tax collections also recorded a modest rise.

However, tax refunds have slowed sharply, falling nearly 16 per cent to Rs 2,03,107.32 crore. Non-corporate refunds were particularly affected, dropping to Rs 62,359.29 crore from Rs 1,20,939.70 crore last year. The slower disbursement of refunds, especially for individual and small business taxpayers, has contributed to a higher net inflow, with net direct tax collections rising 6.33 per cent to Rs 11,89,054.17 crore. *—ANI*

'TIME FOR DARING INNOVATION'

Adani group's ROA reaches 16.5%, among global best

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Adani Group chairman **Gautam Adani** announced that the conglomerate's return on assets (ROA) rose to 16.5 per cent in the financial year 2024–25, placing it among the top performers globally in the infrastructure sector.

Speaking at the annual Shantilal Adani Lecture Series, he attributed the strong results to disciplined growth and efficient capital deployment, noting that this reflects how "our growth is profitable, our assets are productive, and our capital is working with precision."

The Group's net debt-to-EBITDA ratio stood at 2.6x, signalling a conservative leverage profile.

Adani said the company's robust internal cash flows would enable it to self-fund a large portion of its USD 100 billion five-year capital expenditure plan, thereby reducing reliance on external markets.

"This high ROA not only generates cash but strengthens our credibility with lenders, deepens investor confidence, and allows us to take bold bets while preserving balance sheet integrity," he added.

Citing a USD 500 billion opportunity in India's electricity sector by 2032, Adani said the Group aims to secure a 20 per cent share of that market.

Looking ahead, he outlined a 'Two-Track Organisation' model for the next phase of transformation — combining artificial intelligence and human judgement. He also unveiled finance transformation initiatives such as a Finance Control Tower and a Global Capability Centre using AI-led workflows.

Adani concluded by emphasising that this is a time for daring, reinvention, and purposeful innovation, not caution. *—PTI*

SC seeks response on Sahara property sale

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought responses from the Centre, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), and other stakeholders on Sahara India Commercial Corporation Ltd's (SICCL) plea to sell 88 prime properties to Adani Properties Private Limited.

A special bench, comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justices Surya Kant and MM Sundresh, heard the interlocutory application in the long-standing Sahara refund case. Following submissions by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, the court directed that the Union ministries of Finance and Cooperation be made parties and respond by 17 November.

Amicus curiae Shekhar Naphade was asked to compile details of the properties. The court also instructed Sahara to examine claims of unpaid worker salaries. *—PTI*

Meghalaya signs MoU to promote football

SHILLONG, 14 OCT

The Meghalaya government has signed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NorthEast United FC aimed at boosting football development and promote Shillong as the 'Football Capital' of India.

The partnership, effective from 2025 to 2028, brings together NorthEast United FC, Department of Tourism, and Department of Sports and Youth Affairs in a joint effort to promote football culture, encourage youth participation, and strengthen Meghalaya's image as a key tourism destination, they said. Under the MoU, the parties will collaborate on football camps, coach education programmes, fan parks, and youth-focused awareness initiatives aimed at nurturing grassroots talent and enhancing fan engagement. *—PTI*

Snipers on roof for Italy-Israel WC qualifier

UDINE, 14 OCT

Snipers are on the roof of the Israel team hotel in Udine and the Italian city is on maximum alert ahead of a World Cup qualifier on Tuesday. Italy's match against Israel is set to kick off at Stadio Friuli.

The match has been placed in the highest risk category despite a breakthrough ceasefire deal that has paused two years of war in Gaza. A pro-Palestinian march is scheduled to start in the city center a few hours before kickoff and is expected to attract around 10,000 people. It will be kept away from the stadium which is on the outskirts of the city. The Israel team bus will be escorted to the stadium with maximum security and there will also be snipers on the roof of the arena. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

UP Kabaddi League player auction on 3 November

NOIDA, 14 OCT

The Uttar Pradesh Kabaddi League (UPKL), conceptualised and operated by SJ Uplift Kabaddi, and sanctioned by the Uttar Pradesh Kabaddi Association, announced that the Season 2 player auction will be held on 3 November in Noida.

Season 2 marks a significant step forward for UPKL as it expands from eight to 10 teams, reinforcing the league's commitment to fostering kabaddi talent across Uttar Pradesh. The two new franchises joining the competition are Aligarh Tigers and Kanpur Warriors, alongside returning teams Lucknow Lions, Yamuna Yoddha, Noida Ninja, Kashi Kings, Avadh Ramdoot, Bridge Stars, Sangam Challengers, and Ganga Kings of Mirzapur, as per a press release from UPKL.

Each team will enter the auction with a budget of Rs 12 lakh to assemble their roster, bringing the overall player purse to Rs 1.2 crore. Players will be drawn from a pool of 500 athletes. *—ANI*

Rat delays Wales-Belgium WC qualifier

CARDIFF, 14 OCT

Play was briefly delayed in a World Cup qualifier between Wales and Belgium after a rat entered the field.

Belgium was leading 2-1 in the second half when the rat was spotted outside the area of goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois on Monday. The Belgian tried to pick up the rat but it escaped.

Wales forward Brennan Johnson ended up chasing it away through the sidelines as the crowd cheered.

The small delay happened after the match was stopped by the referee so a player could receive treatment on the field.

Belgium won 4-2 to take the lead of Group J in European qualifying for the 2026 World Cup. *—PTI*

SA TESTS

It's a clean sweep but questions remain

India defeated West Indies by 7 wickets in the 2nd and final Test for a 2-0 series sweep

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The formalities took just about an hour to complete as India defeated West Indies by seven wickets in the second and final Test here on Tuesday for a 2-0 series sweep during which the markedly superior hosts were tested only towards the end.

Besides reaffirming India's home supremacy, the triumph will also go down as Shubman Gill's first series victory as India's Test captain.

Needing just 58 runs to reach the target of 121, KL Rahul (58 not out off 108 balls), with Dhruv Jurel for company (6 not out) completed the task in 35.2 overs. Rahul hit six fours and two sixes, adding 79 with Sai Sudharsan (39) for the second wicket.

While the second Test dragged into the fifth morning - largely because of the resistance from centurions John Campbell (115) and Shai Hope (103), and a dogged 10th-wicket stand - the Feroz Shah Kotla track offered little assistance to spinners, remaining low and slow throughout.

India's players celebrate with the trophy after winning the cricket Test series against West Indies at Arun Jaitley Stadium *PHOTO: PTI*

Across two Tests, Indian bowlers claimed all 40 opposition wickets, with pacers contributing admirably on unhelpful surfaces and spinners showing patience when conditions turned docile at the Kotla.

For Indian batters, there were five centuries and a near-90 among the top six across two matches.

Yet, when viewed in context, given that none of the West Indies top-order batters currently average even 35 in Test cricket, let alone 40 which is considered the benchmark, the gains, beyond the valuable World Test Championship points, appear limited.

Despite the late spark shown by his side, Roston Chase became just the second West Indies captain to lose all his first five Tests as leader after Kraigg Brathwaite.

India's real test will come against South Africa, and if the first two days of the Pakistan-South Africa Test in Lahore are any indication, the turn and variable bounce at the Gaddafi Stadium is making quite a difference.

Out of the 16 wickets to fall across those two days, 15 have been claimed by spinners.

That raises a pertinent question -- whether playing on flat batting tracks against a much stronger South African line-up would be a prudent choice.

This Indian batting line-up, apart from KL Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja, is relatively young. However, both Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill now possess enough experience to handle challenging surfaces.

It is worth remembering that the now retired Virat Kohli's Test average dipped during the phase when India regularly played on rank turners. But those same pitches helped Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja evolve into world-beaters. *—PTI*

> I try to make the most probable decision in the given situation that we're in that game. And sometimes you have to take a little bit of bold decisions and that X factor depending on which player can get you certain runs or can get you those wickets.
>
> -Shubman Gill, India Test captain

'ODI WC IS 2.5 YRS AWAY'

No guarantee for Rohit, Kohli in WC

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma are keen on playing the 2027 ODI World Cup but India head coach Gautam Gambhir was non-committal over the star duo's future on Tuesday, saying the ODI World Cup is still more than two years away and "it is important to stay in the present".

With Shubman Gill's appointment as the ODI skipper, the national selectors have already hit the transition button in ODI cricket and there is a lot of doubt over the future of the ageing stalwarts who will be 39 (Kohli) and 40 (Rohit) respectively in 2027.

"The 50-over World Cup is still two and a half years away. It is very important to stay in the present. Obviously, they are quality players. They are coming back. Their experience is going to be valuable in Australia," he said.

"Hopefully those two guys can have a successful tour, and more importantly, as a team we can have a successful series," Gambhir said when asked about the future of the two former skippers.

It is believed that a lot will depend on how the duo plays in the nine ODIs in the next couple of months (3 vs Australia, 3 vs SA and 3 vs NZ). In the past one year, the Indian team has undergone transition across all formats under Gambhir's coaching.

When asked what are the attributes he is looking for when he wants to blood a player in the national team, Gambhir presented his checklist.

"First and foremost, you look at talent. Then you look at the work ethic. You look at the characters in that dressing room, especially in red-ball cricket. *—PTI*

Shameful to target Harshit: Gambhir

"Shameful", said a livid India head coach Gautam Gambhir on Tuesday as he hit back at former chairman of selectors Kris Srikkanth for alleging that pacer Harshit Rana has been picked for the ODI tour of Australia for being a "constant yes man" to him. "Look, it's extremely shameful. If you are criticising 23-year-olds to run your YouTube channel, that is unfair," Gambhir replied to a query from PTI after the end of the second Test, which India won by seven wickets here.

Women's WC: England are favourites against Pak

COLOMBO, 14 OCT

- Sciver-Brunt has led from the front so far with the skipper showing the kind of devastation she can wreak on the opposition with the bat and ball

On a roll after three commanding wins on the trot, England seem to be at a different level, and a listless Pakistan are unlikely to pose a major challenge when the two teams clash in their ICC Women's World Cup match here on Wednesday.

Three one-sided wins, beginning with the 10-wicket decimation of South Africa, have taken England in a zone and Nat Sciver-Brunt's team would be hoping to gain further momentum before they clash against the big three -- India, Australia and New Zealand -- in the league stage.

Sciver-Brunt has led from the front so far with the skipper showing the kind of devastation she can wreak on the opposition with the bat and ball. The 33-year-old right-hander smashed a run-a-ball 117 and took two wickets with her unsettling pace as England defeated co-hosts Sri Lanka by 89 runs.

With a batting unit having the likes of Amy Jones, Tammy Beaumont, Heather Knight and Sophia Dunkley besides Sciver-Brunt herself, it's no surprise the team is placed second on the table with six points behind seven-time champions Australia, who are on seven points.

They will get a chance to go to the top of the table, with Pakistan, who are playing all their games in Colombo, looking like amateurs without proper tactic or technique.

England have shown how quickly they can acclimatise to venues and pitches, having played their two opening games against South Africa and Bangladesh in Guwahati and then playing against Sri Lanka in Colombo. *—PTI*

It's Pant's return and new stars on horizon for Ranji 2025-26

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

The possibility of Rishabh Pant's return to action, an array of new stars on the horizon and a clutch of veterans' battle for relevance will provide much-needed context to the 91st edition of the Ranji Trophy, beginning across the country on Wednesday.

Pant's possible appearance in the second round is the highlight of Ranji Trophy's first phase, which otherwise lacks any immediate purpose in the larger scheme of things because of India's long Test winter after the home series against South Africa next month.

Pant is out of action since a Chris Woakes delivery fractured his toe in July, and his rehabilitation at the BCCI Centre of Excellence is on the right track. The wicketkeeper batter's name is missing from Delhi's jumbo squad of 24 players for the opening match against Hyderabad.

However, not many players would be nourishing any hopes of entering the Indian team riding on their performance in the Ranji Trophy because the international calendar is packed with white-ball matches.

It is also unlikely that India will tinker with their chosen 15, which did the duty against the just-concluded series against the West Indies, considering the significance of a series against South Africa and the World Test Championship points on offer.

Meanwhile, defending champions Vidarbha will not like to give away the silverware easily, and teams like Kerala, last year's runners up, Saurashtra, Delhi and Karnataka will be eager to regain the glory. *—PTI*

FIDE WC: Gukesh seeded top, Erigaisi, Pragg 2nd and 3rd

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Reigning world champion D Gukesh will be the top seed in the FIDE World Cup, beginning in Goa from October 30, followed by compatriots Arjun Erigaisi and R Praggnanandhaa.

The tournament, which culminates on November 27, will see a collection of frontline stars and Denmark's Anish Giri is seeded fourth.

The event carries a hefty prize purse of USD 2 million and will feature 206 participants from across the globe.

Apart from the attractive prizes on offer, the players will also vie for three spots in the 2026 Candidates Tournament.

The top three finishers in Goa will earn direct spots in the Candidates.

USA's Wesley So is the fifth seed followed by Vincent Keymer, Wei Yi, Nodirbek Abdusattorov, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov and Hans Niemann in that order.

This year the men's World Cup is a separate event from the corresponding women's tournament, which was held in July and won by Divya Deshmukh.

The victory earned her the grandmaster title and a place in the 2026 Women's Candidates. *—PTI*

ICELAND TO CAPE VERDE

5 SMALLEST COUNTRIES EVER TO REACH WORLD CUP

THE tiny African island nation of Cape Verde qualified for the World Cup for the first time on Monday after beating Eswatini 3-0.

With a population smaller than that of the US state of Vermont, Cape Verde is the second smallest country to make it to the men's World Cup since the first tournament in 1930.

HERE'S A LOOK AT THE TINIEST COUNTRIES IN WORLD CUP HISTORY, BASED ON THEIR POPULATION WHEN THEY APPEARED AT THE TOURNAMENT:

ICELAND

With a population of just over 350,000, Iceland became the smallest country to reach the World Cup when it qualified for the tournament in Russia in 2018.

That was two years after the team famously eliminated England to reach the quarterfinals of the 2016 European Championship. In Russia, Iceland managed a draw against Argentina but losses to Croatia and Nigeria placed it last in its World Cup group.

PARAGUAY

The South American country had an estimated population of just under 1 million when it appeared at the inaugural World Cup in 1930.

Paraguay was eliminated in the first round after losing to the United States and defeating Belgium.

The Paraguayans will make their ninth World Cup appearance next year after grabbing the last of South America's six direct qualifying spots.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The Caribbean country of Trinidad and Tobago won an international playoff to earn its first and only World Cup appearance in 2006 in Germany.

With a population of 1.3 million, it was the smallest country in that tournament by some margin.

Trinidad and Tobago salvaged a draw with Sweden but lost against England and Paraguay to finish last in its group.

It has not been back to the World Cup since.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland had an estimated 1.4 million inhabitants when it reached the 1958 World Cup. The team defeated Czechoslovakia, lost to Argentina and drew against Germany in the group stage. It was eliminated by France in the knockout phase. Northern Ireland also played in the World Cup in 1982 and 1986.

CAPE VERDE

The island nation off the coast of West Africa has about 525,000 inhabitants and is ranked 70th in the FIFA men's world ranking. Cape Verde earned a spot at the 2026 World Cup by finishing first in its African qualifying group ahead of Cameroon, one of the continent's top soccer powers.

The country which won independence from Portugal 50 years ago has appeared at the Africa Cup of Nations four times, and reached the quarterfinals in 2013 and 2023.

Of the countries that have qualified so far for next year's World Cup in the U.S., Mexico and Canada, it is by far the smallest.